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CORN HILL MAGAZINE

EDITED BY
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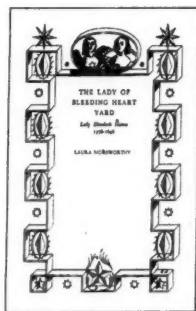
BOOK NOTES FOR NOVEMBER

A Great Gentleman

LORD PLUMER was a great soldier, a great administrator, and, above all, a great Christian gentleman. His life under the title of *Plumer of Messines* has now been written by General Sir Charles Harington, G.C.B., G.B.E., who was Lord Plumer's trusted Chief of Staff of the Second Army, and he describes the great General's career with remarkable insight. He enters into no controversy over the Passchendaele Campaign of 1917 but, with unequalled knowledge of the facts, tells the real story of the Second Army. This book, which also contains a Foreword by the Archbishop of Canterbury, will be an inspiration to all who honour great Englishmen.

A Great Gentlewoman

RICHARD BARHAM in the *Ingoldsby Legends* says that Lady Elizabeth Hatton, grand-daughter of Queen Elizabeth's Lord Treasurer Burghley, was in league with the devil who at last demanded his usual fee for his services and carried her off with thunder and lightning from a party at Hatton House, Holborn, and that her bleeding heart was later found in the yard that now bears this name. Having the aid of the devil or not, she was remarkably spirited in a spirited age and her sprightly story has been told in a delicious manner by Laura Norsworthy in *The Lady of Bleeding Heart Yard*.



Nelson's Hardy

HARDY, of Trafalgar fame, is one of those unfortunate personages of history, whose fame is bound to one incident which has caught popular imagination, and whose general desert has gone unnoticed. In *Nelson's Hardy and His Wife*, written by John Gore from papers long hidden in family archives, including Lady Hardy's diary, a true picture is given of the able sailor in whose arms Nelson died, and the world is introduced to the highly individual and somewhat restive lady, his wife.

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

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BOOK NOTES FOR NOVEMBER

Travels In Spain

THIS is a brightly written narrative dealing with the easy-going life of Spain where 'nothing ever happens,' and when it does, 'it is unexpected.' The authors, Richard and Phyllis Pearsall, travelled around Spain with a pen for its beauties and the characteristic varieties of its scene, and a pencil for the humours of its ever-entertaining inhabitants. Many of their sketches adorn the text and *Castilian Ochre* is likely to prove one of the most sought-after books of travel of the autumn season.



MRS. PEARSALL WEARING A MONTEHERMOSAU HAT.

The romance of the Paisley shawl

THE new novel by Mr. Allan Govan, well-known author of *Children of the Hills*, is written around the story of the Paisley shawl and is aptly named *The Peacock Pattern*. The scene is laid in the quaint little weaving town of Paisley of a hundred years ago, and the people who fill his pages are the men and the women and the little children by whose patient labour the shawls were made. Against a background of hope and despair, of laughter and tears, Mr. Govan's characters stand out vividly living men and women who are strong, weak, lovable, foolish, pitiful and gay.

An impression of England

AN interesting book just published is *This Our Country*, by Major Rawdon R. Hoare. The author has recently returned home after fourteen years abroad and he examines our changed conditions and the proposed remedies. He visits the great industrial centres and the distressed areas; he writes first-hand of coal-mines, docks and shipyards and has much to say that is cogent on the subject of arms. This is a valuable book for all those interested in the economic life of the country to-day.

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Some attacks on us and a statement of Italian aims.

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THE
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NOVEMBER 1935.

VICEROY OF JUDAH'S LION.

BY DOUGLAS V. DUFF.

FROM the very beginning of my duties as officer in charge of armed constabulary in the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem, I had been impressed by the humble, pious and unobtrusive demeanour of the Abyssinian monks who worshipped on the sites of Calvary and the Sacred Tomb.

When one was harassed by the turbulence of the different Churches, all concerned with asserting and maintaining their rights and privileges against what they considered encroachments, it was refreshing to see the dark-faced, bare-footed African monks, wrapped in a coarse, blanket-like cloak, leaning on their tall staves, wrapt in quiet contemplation and prayer. Their heads, crowned with a tall, cylindrical black hat, not unlike that of the Greeks, but neither so sleek nor of such good materials, were bowed in silent worship, desiring nothing but the right to be left alone to meditate upon the world-changing events that, tradition says, happened upon the spot where they stood.

In the years that followed I got to know these quiet, peaceful monks as well as I knew Latin, Greek, Armenian and Syriac clerics, and to respect and honour them, as I found it difficult to do their fellow-owners of the great Basilica which is Christendom's centre.

Their tiny, poverty-stricken village, two small streets of hermitages, built upon the roof of the church, and their small courtyard which is actually the roof surrounding the dome over St. Helena's Chapel, came to be a haven of peace and a place in which to forget the many intrigues with which I was continually required to deal. This village of one-room cells, each with its own vaulted stone roof, is built upon the floor of the ruined Abbey church where, in Crusading days, the Augustinian Canons Regular had their home, as close to Calvary as they could build it, and is one of the most interesting places in the world. Even in Jerusalem, that city of so many contrasts, the Ethiopian monastery is unique.

Mikhail, the Lord Abbot, the spiritual and temporal head of

the few Ethiopians in the Holy Land, is a striking, impressive and majestic figure. He is tall, fine featured, and, although his face is dark, it is by no means black, whilst his regular nose and lips dispel all suspicion of any negro blood. He is thin, for he practises the asceticism of the true monk, observing the many fasts of the Abyssinian Church, Advent, that of Nineveh, Heraclius, Lent and Pentecost, with the utmost exactitude, whilst no anchorite of the Middle Ages could surpass his complete frugality of life. In him, as in all these dark-skinned monks of the Land of Prester John who live under his rule in the Holy City, monastic discipline and conventual rigour are practised in their primitive fervour and austerity. In the Palestine monasteries and hermitages there is no trace of any striving after political power as a reward for the sackcloth garb of the monk. Here we see monasticism practised as it was in ancient days, in the period of Early Christendom, when Heaven and Earth were near together, the veil worn thin to those who forsook all to live a life of self-denial and sacrifice, in an endeavour to approach true Contemplation of the Infinite.

But the Lord Abbot, despite his innate sanctity and severity of life, is no man to make others miserable by a study of his mode of life. He is a brilliant, clever and merry-hearted gentleman, polished and educated, able to meet foreigners upon their own ground, although his innate dignity, which one senses behind the hardly tangible reserve, prevents any suggestion of the curtal friar becoming apparent.

He is also a capable and astute business man. He has to be, for the Ethiopian Church has large holdings in Jerusalem and the country round. Besides their comfortless, arid village upon the roof of the Holy Sepulchre, there is a large Abbey in the Meashorem Quarter of the New City, whose blue dome dominates the north-western sky-line of the suburbs. He has also to manage the new buildings erected as a memorial to the pilgrimage of the present Emperor Hailie Selassie, King of Kings, and Lion of Judah, who, as Ras Tafari, Crown Prince of the Empire, visited Jerusalem in 1925. Pilgrimage to the Holy City is an act of infinite merit to the Abyssinian, one to which every Christian in that far country bends every effort, for by treading these sacred stones, he can obtain absolution for his many sins, and place himself in the way of eternal bliss. No far-fetched notion, when one remembers our own forefathers who held the same idea. Did not Fitzurse and the other murderers of Thomas à Becket come here, to lay their bones

in holy soil, as their sole hope of wiping out the stain they contracted in Canterbury's cathedral?

Besides these possessions in Jerusalem, the Abbot is also Superior of a true Abyssinian village on the banks of Jordan, a collection of huts and churches, standing within their ring-fence in the heat and poisonous atmosphere of that Valley, a thousand feet below the level of the Mediterranean.

It was in this village of Bethabara that I used generally to visit him. I had to take a large party of armed police to the traditional site of the Baptism of Christ each year, on January 18, the Feast of the Epiphany, according to the Greek rite. Large parties of pilgrims and sight-seers come down to the Bethabara Ford, to see the Greek Patriarch carry out the ceremony of the Blessing of the Waters, and many hundreds, especially Russian women, immerse themselves in the muddy, swift-flowing waters of the river.

Our presence was very necessary, for, besides the ever-present danger of a Bedouin raid from the other bank, as the Jordan is Palestine's frontier, there were always several accidents, and had it not been for our presence, some of the pilgrims, practically none of whom seemed to be able to swim, would have been wrenched from their precarious handgrips on the bushes and their slippery footholds in the slimy mud, and swept away by the racing current to swift and certain death. I had managed to obviate this danger to some degree by stretching a stout rope from bank to bank, when I had become weary of having to go wet through for hours after fishing some drowning pilgrim from a watery grave, a thing which happened, I believe, four times during my first visit there. This served to catch the drowning person as he whirled swiftly down-stream at a good six and a half knots, and allowed us time to rescue him in a boat.

It was the tinkling of a little bell amongst the thick jungle that borders Jordan, that first led me to the Abyssinian hermit village. On the second day of the Festival, before the crowds began to arrive from Jericho, where they had mustered on the preceding evening, I took my twelve-bore under my arm, and strolled around the edge of the tangled mass of undergrowth and muddy pools, left by the torrential rains, and walked towards the hermitage.

On my way I shot two fine mallard and a lovely widgeon. As I scrambled back to firm ground on the pebbly bottom of Wadi

Kelt, I was lucky enough to flush a hare and to drop him with my choke-barrel. Hafiz, my Bedouin orderly, one of the best troopers in the Force, was highly delighted, and was almost walking on air in his ecstasy. We turned down a little path, tramped flat by the passage of many feet, winding amongst the twenty-foot high brush-wood, when he gave a sudden cry :

'*Kanzir, ya Sidi, Kanzir, b'il Yameenakh!* A pig, Lord, a pig over there to your right!' As he shouted I heard the brute, crashing its way in terror-stricken flight. Through a gap in the stunted trees I saw him galloping like the wind, not twenty-five yards away, and I hit him fair and square with the lethal-ball I carried especially for such a piece of luck. Hafiz, good Moslem, would not touch the carcase, but he chattered delightedly about how much he would get for the meat by selling it to the Greek huntsman whose shack stands at the side of the ford.

'These Christian dogs, Bey, will pay much for this meat, filth-eaters that they be,' he chortled, in complete disregard that he was speaking to me, an Infidel, and his officer. But, your Arab trooper, if he likes his commander, always identifies him with himself, and affects to forget the regrettable fact that his British officer is, unfortunately, one of the Accursed.

Leaving the pig lying—he was a fine, three-year old boar—I continued down the path, until I came, suddenly, into a clearing, with the higher trees, standing on Jordan's banks, lining the farther side. Facing me was a long palisade, a good fifteen feet high, the roofs of several thatched buildings jutting into the air above it.

I saw some figures moving; they were dimly visible through the chinks of part of the palisade, and I hailed them. There were a few moments of delay, whilst I could hear some shouting inside the compound, and then a section of the fence, about fifteen to twenty feet long, suddenly turned upwards, and I saw that some men were pulling on a rope attached to a tree-trunk that stood a-top the moving section. It opened from the ground upwards, like the door of a gigantic mouse-trap, and through the breach I went, Hafiz close behind me, to be greeted by some of the Abyssinian monks with whom I was so familiar in the Holy Sepulchre.

The hermitage consisted of about twenty huts, built like beehives, of reeds stretched between wooden posts, and daubed with some mixture of dung and mud. They were all raised on low piles, a necessity here, within the Pride of Jordan, where the floods rise several feet, when the snows melt on Hermon in the late spring.

In the centre was a larger building, differing from the others only on account of its size. From the large crosses and rough mural paintings I judged this to be the church, and found afterwards that I was quite correct in my surmise.

The monks and nuns, for there were several women present, visitors from Jerusalem, mainly pilgrims from their distant homeland, who had come to participate in the annual festival and to see the blessed water of the river, received me with that infectious, white-toothed smile of theirs. Your Abyssinian is a creature of gaiety, though he is capable of the most elemental passions, and is, generally speaking, a very gentle person, when his ire has not been roused by some real or fancied grievance. Their reputation for the kind treatment of prisoners taken in war bears this out. Even after Adowa, when the first storm of bitterness and lying propaganda had died down, it was generally admitted that the unfortunate Italians were treated with perfect consideration.

Hafiz remained at the gate. He did not want to come in, and the monks, though perfectly courteous, evidently did not crave for the Moslem's presence in their sanctuary. The Lord Abbot came to greet me, and conducted me to his own lodgings, one of the largest, and, incidentally the cleanest, of the huts. The atmosphere was stifling, for, exact copies as they are of their own homes in Abyssinia, none of the buildings were provided with a chimney, and all had fires going, as they were busily preparing their bread, they call it *teff*, a thin cake made from durra, which they allow to rise in the sun, after they have kneaded the dough, before they take it into the ovens.

Coffee was offered to me, the finest coffee in the world, for nowhere can the Ethiopian berry be equalled in flavour and aroma, and then, as the Lord Abbot appeared to be inclined for conversation, and I had an hour or two to spare before the duties of the day commenced, I stayed there and spoke to him. His Arabic was none too good, but, through the interpretership of the gorgeously uniformed *kawass*, his ceremonial bodyguard, we managed exceedingly well.

I offered him the game I had shot on my way to his village. Courteously he thanked me, but when I told him of what the bag consisted, he said that waterfowl, hares and pig-flesh were alike forbidden by the canons of his Church, explaining, with a smile, that the prohibition was doubtlessly a survival of the ancient connection between Israel and Ethiopia, which commenced with

the mating of Solomon the Wise with Sheba's Queen, and resulted in the birth of the great progenitor of the Empire's dynasty, Menelek ben Suleiman el Hakim, from whom all the Kings of Kings had been descended, and whose blood still flowed in the veins of the present Emperor. He waxed eloquent on the ancient descent of the royal house, and told me how nearly it had been extinguished by the Jewish Princess Judith about the year A.D. 1000, and of how usurpers had sat on the throne of the Lion of Judah, until the old line was restored by King Yekuno Amlak in 1268.

From this it was no far cry to the next step in our discussion, the fundamental differences between his Church and the Western forms of Christianity. As he spoke I felt myself transported back to the days of Early Christendom, when thousands died for the sake of a hair-splitting formula. These abstruse differences were a matter of very lively import to this medieval figure sitting before me, lord and head of everything around him, and gravely I listened.

'It is hard for you to understand, Effendi,' said the Lord Abbot, 'you are a soldier and our theological differences mean naught to you, but to us they are everything. You, as a Westerner, believe as you have been ordered to do, ever since that iniquitous meeting of false shepherds at Chalcedon on October 8, 451.

'There they enforced their heretical belief in the Hypostatic Union of the two natures in our Redeemer, that the Human and the Divine were perfectly united in the One Person, that he was neither all Divine nor all human, but two natures. Now we have remained true to the old belief, as exemplified in the ever-glorious Council of Ephesus, which preceded it, that which those greedy priests, using their tool, the Greek Emperor Marcian, have caused to be called "the robber synod." We hold that the two natures are separate, as taught by the blessed servant of God, Eutyches, who says that, after the two Natures were fused in Christ, there remained only One Nature, that of the Incarnate Word. Here is where we differ.'

'But, my lord Abbot,' I queried, thoroughly puzzled, 'wherein lies the difference? You say that there is but one nature after the fusing of the two Natures, whereas the Council of Chalcedon ordained that the same two Natures are combined in a hypostatic union. I failed to see any difference in actual fact.'

He smiled patiently. 'I did not think that you would grasp the difference. Let me put it briefly, you Westerners believe that

the Redeemer is True God and True Man in one person, we, that the two Natures are fused, are separate whilst inseparable, that he has but one Nature, that of the Eternal Word made up of the fusing of the Divine and Human Natures, but that, despite this fusing, each Nature is distinct, uncommingled and unconfounded. In short, you believe in one Person, compounded of two Natures, whilst we believe that He has but one Nature, made up of the fusing of the Divine and the Human sides of His being. Do I make myself clear ?

I felt that I was being whirled into the most intricate pages of *The Decline and Fall*, and could only mutely nod my head, whilst my brain dazedly tried to discover any fundamental difference between a Person consisting of two Natures, and a Nature consisting of the fusing of two other natures, I gave it up, and shifted my ground to something more simple.

'But, apart from this question of Monophysitism, there is no other difference between you and us, is there ?' I asked.

Again the gentle smile. 'There is none between us and the great Eastern Church, but much between us and the Communion of the West. We deny the supremacy of Rome, and hold, with the Greeks, the single procession of the Holy Ghost. The "Filioque" clause of the Nicene Creed is as much a bar to us, as it is to them.'

He went on to speak of the ancientness of Ethiopia's Christianity, dating from A.D. 330 when the bishop Frumentius, consecrated Bishop of Ethiopia by the great St. Athanasius of Alexandria himself, carried out the conversion of the country. In the early fifth century a great company of monks poured into Abyssinia, and have had the greatest possible effect on the subsequent history of the people. The Abbot paused to throw scorn on my suggestion that Cedrenus definitely states that Ethiopian conversion occurred under the Emperor Justinian about the year 542, and told me that great monasteries and cathedrals were already in existence there, long before that date.

The head of the Abyssinian Church is the 'Abuna' (literally 'Our Father'), who, with one exception, has, ever since the days of Bishop Frumentius, been appointed by the Coptic Patriarch of Alexandria, and has always been a foreigner. Only during the sixteenth century, when the Portuguese Jesuits were supreme in Abyssinia, has the historic connection with Egypt been broken.

Passionately the Abbot sprang to his defence, when I inquired whether, during this period, there had been any breaking of the

Apostolic succession, and the consequent non-validation of their priestly Orders. There had been no break, he declared. The Supreme Head of their Church was the Coptic Patriarch, and the 'Abuna' was merely his viceroy, although he had all jurisdiction in his own hands. Their Orders were safeguarded by the consecration of the 'Abuna' by the Patriarch, whose style is 'The Most Holy Pope and Patriarch of the great city of Alexandria, of all the land of Egypt, of Jerusalem the Holy City, of Nubia, Pentapolis and Abyssinia and all the preaching of Saint Mark.' 'No,' he concluded, 'the Orders of the Ethiopian priests are as valid as any of those of the West or the East, and both Churches admit us to be priests in the true sense of the word and in the direct Apostolic succession.'

It was rapidly approaching the time when I should have to return to my men, and to make arrangements for their duties during the coming ceremonial, so I rose and asked his permission to depart. He consented, after first asking me to spend an hour or two with him in the Abbey in Jerusalem, a place to which I had never been, although I had often visited him in the village on the roof of the Basilica.

It was some months later that I paid my visit to him. His *kawass*, great silver sword on thigh, came to my office in the Central Barracks, and presented me with a letter from the Lord Abbot. It was in flowing Amharic script, which, unlike any other Semitic writing, runs from left to right, and meant less than nothing to me. The *kawass* translated into Arabic. It appeared that the next day was the Feast of Saint Pontius Pilate, and my presence was requested at the Abbey. Startled at the seemingly incongruous title, I asked the *kawass* if the holy man had any connection with the Roman Procurator of Judea, and received the solemn answer that they were one and the same person.

'The Blessed Pilate,' said the *kawass*, 'stricken with remorse at the part he had played, defied the Roman Emperor to his face, confessed Christ, and was himself crucified on Mount Calvary, a few years after the Crucifixion.'

That was certainly a new tale about the duty-oppressed Roman Governor in so far as I was concerned. I bade the *kawass* thank his master for the invitation, and tell him that I should be only too pleased and honoured to take advantage of it.

Next afternoon, at the hour appointed, I made my visit to the Abbey. I found that the place was *en fête*, and I was taken into the

great guest hall. The dark-skinned monks and pilgrims were full of gaiety, but you may imagine my feeling when a raw steak, still bleeding, so freshly had it been cut from the carcase, was placed in front of me. This was considered the greatest delicacy of the feast, and the remainder commenced eating it with gusto. Now my stomach is fairly well hardened by years of service in Palestine amongst the fellahin and Bedouin, but a raw steak had never looked me so closely in the face before. It was nauseating and horrid, but I assumed a look of appreciation, reflecting, philosophically, that there was no real difference between it and the English version, if one excepted the frying-pan and the onions, and ate it, though I managed to evade a second portion.

There were two types of drinks provided, one they called *mese* was a thick, musty mead, and was reserved for the higher table, for, like our Saxon ancestors, we were grouped above and below the salt, whilst great jars of a heady beer, called *bousa*, made, I afterwards discovered, from fermented cakes, was served to the lower orders.

After the feast I was taken around the Abbey church by the Lord Abbot himself, attended by his *kawass* and two people who, I believe, were the Prior and Sub-prior. It was a circular building, with no windows in the walls, although there were some small ones high up under the dome. Nowhere was there any sign of statue or crucifix, although there were large mural paintings on every wall. In the very centre of the rotunda, immediately under the dome, stood the square enclosure of the sanctuary, which in addition to the altar in its centre, had close beside it a small oven.

The altar was a plain, simple affair of a wooden slab standing on four legs. In the centre was a small depression, which contained a square of alabaster, the *tabut*, as the Abbot called it, the essential part of the altar, upon which the Mass was said. This *tabut* had many crosses carved upon it as well as the usual Coptic trisagion. The vessels were the same as those used in the West. There were chalice, paten, ewer, basin, and chrismatory. An astern of two half-hoops of silver, crossed in the centre, was used as a covering for the wafer, whilst I also saw a flabellum, though this was of common brass. Thuribles of the most beautiful silverwork were grouped in great profusion along one of the walls, as incensing forms a constant and important part of all their services.

I commented on the absence of a tabernacle, and also saw that there was no form of pyx anywhere amongst the church furniture.

The Lord Abbot replied by telling me that Reservation of the Sacrament was not practised by them, indeed the Coptic Church considered the consecrated elements too holy to be kept unattended on the altar. On occasions of grave emergency, such as in time of battle, the Wafer might be retained, but, if it was, priests had to be in constant attendance and lamps had to be kept burning incessantly before It.

The next thing that took my notice was the little oven standing in the sanctuary. This, I was told, is for the baking of the bread, which is made in a circular disk, about three inches in diameter and about one inch thick, each morning before Mass is said. I was taken over to a small wine-press in the side of the church. Here is where the sacramental wine is prepared. It must be made from raisins and has to be fermented before it may be used. Communion is given in both kinds, the Prior told me, although the laity are not required to be fasting from the preceding midnight.

The mural paintings were extremely forceful in their execution; though somewhat crude they were full of power. The influence of the early days of Christianity was clearly visible in the continuance of the ancient tradition of portraying saints, angels and all good persons full face, whilst devils and evil men were shown in profile. The veneration of the saints and angels is so great that it might almost be said to amount to worship, in any case it is far more intense in the amount of honour paid, than that given by any Italian or Spanish shepherd.

Shortly afterwards I left the Abbey, after seeing the humble, austere quarters occupied by the Lord Abbot, no different in their stark simplicity from that of the lowest monk under his jurisdiction. The reception rooms, the hall of audience, were magnificent, but the apartments in which he spent the greater portion of his life were of the poorest and barest. The *kawass* told me that the Abbot, whenever he could manage to do so, when the pressure of public affairs allowed it, spent all his time in a cold, damp cell in the village on top of the Holy Sepulchre.

But it was on Holy Saturday night that one saw the Abyssinian Church in all its glory. On that night they met on the roof of the Basilica, in their courtyard around the dome of St. Helena's Chapel, to celebrate the glory of the Resurrection. A gorgeous pavilion is pitched, with a high silver throne for the Abbot, and chairs for the honoured guests who are invited to do honour to the occasion.

I used to go there with some fifty men to keep order, not that

the black monks would have caused trouble, but a great crowd of Jerusalem's riff-raff come to the courtyard to scoff at the despised *Habashi*, and to break up the procession of earnest votaries from a spirit of sheer malicious horse-play.

The ceremony does not start until late in the night, about half-past ten, and the scene is brilliantly lit by flaring arc-lamps slung on wires overhead, wires that stretch from the dome over Calvary to the spring of the arches in the ruined cloister of the Crusading Augustinians. In the centre is the pavilion, around which the brown-cloaked monks are continually coming and going, negro servants rush about carrying chairs and pieces of carpet, the *kawass* in his brightest uniform of royal blue and gold embroidery appears, thudding with his silver mace upon the flagstones, announcing and preceding the person of some dignitary arriving to honour the ceremony with his presence.

In the tent, gorgeous carpets are spread upon the floor. In the front row sit the scarlet-gowned Anglican bishop and his sombre-garbed clergy, the Coptic bishop and his attendants are also there, as are some of the foreign consuls and many European tourists anxious to see this strange African ceremonial on the very roof of Christendom's heart.

When all is ready the Lord Abbot enters, preceded by his cross-bearer and chapter. In his hand is a small benedictional cross, held by a silk handkerchief of all the variegated colours of the rainbow. His vestments are of cloth-of-gold and scintillate with jewels and ornaments, whilst on his head is a great silver mitre, seemingly too large for him and looking like a vast helmet around whose rim, outlined against his swarthy forehead, are numerous tiny silver bells. The hem of his cope-like upper vestment bears a similar ornamentation, which chime sweetly and eerily, like far-off fairy-bells as he walks.

There is a long service, at the conclusion of which comes the real barbaric touch, the sign-manual of Ethiopia's early paganism shining through its superimposed Christianity. On the floor lie several long drums, beautifully and strangely ornamented in silver and gold, hollowed out from the trunk of a tree. A priest sits at each drum, squatting on his heels, and then, with quick, feverish beats, commences a long roll, which quickly breaks into a thundering crescendo. You can see the gathering excitement growing on the faces of the assembled clerics and monks in inverse ratio to their rank. First the servants, then the priests, followed by the higher

officers of the Abbey, until, at last, even the grave, austere face of the Lord Abbot himself breaks into the joy he feels at contemplation of the Resurrection of his Master.

Forth goes the whole procession, attended by the more distinguished of the guests, every one bearing a lighted candle, and then, to the rolling thunder of the barbaric drums, the wildly swinging thuribles in the hands of the dusky acolytes, the tinkle of the silver bells, and the deep, throaty diapason of the manly voices of the chanting monks, the whole of the Lord Abbot's retinue sweeps round the dome of St. Helena in a threefold circuit.

The crowd of roughs hoots and yells at the spectacle, only to change their note as my Moslem troopers get amongst them, and drive them out of the courtyard they profane, for the policeman loves these gentle dark men, who cause no trouble and give him no long weary hours in the gloomy Basilica, half-stifled with the odours of packed humanity, flaring candles and reeking incense.

Then, their circle completed, the guests fade away, whilst the monks return to their pavilion, there to watch and pray through the night of Resurrection. In his tiny, dank, vaulted cell, the Lord Abbot, laying aside the pomp and dignity of his high office, and clad only in coarse brown habit, kneels on the humid flagstones in silent, lone, rapt contemplation of the Risen Glory of Easter.

THE MECHANICAL WIFE.

BY FREYA STARK.

'He is unexceptionable,' said the Fairy Godmother. 'A young man truly to be esteemed. From his earliest infancy he has ever been my particular care : I have instilled into his mind the principles of philosophy and moral truth. He is neither rash nor indifferent, intolerant nor epicurean. He has not the waywardness of genius, nor the intellectual sloth of the sporting youth. Satisfied with what pleasures are attainable, he dwells in obscurity in a suburb. He consults me on all questions.'

'It sounds truly edifying,' said the Small Demon beside her. 'I am fond of the good young men myself ; they are full of surprises. How old is yours ?'

'He is twenty-five. Indeed, it has been an anxious time for me. I told you he consults me in all things ? It has recently been my duty to find him a wife. Can you imagine anything more delicate in this age of unfeminine evolution ? He himself sets no peculiar value on beauty of feature or acuteness of intellect alone : his desire, he told me, was for the perfect harmony of outward accomplishment with the spirit within—a balance. . . .'

'Not easy to find,' remarked her impish companion.

The Fairy Godmother sighed and shook her head. 'I sifted London and the Home Counties,' she proceeded. 'But I myself felt that it was an impossibility. Luck, however, has favoured me. I have been able to procure what was required—the very thing to ensure happiness on a dependable basis such as he desires. I had a mechanical wife made to suit him.'

'A what ?'

'A mechanical wife. It is wound up once a day like a clock. It is most satisfactory.'

'Indeed,' said the Imp. 'How very interesting.'

'Yes,' said the Fairy Godmother with some pride. 'She was very beautifully executed. Her features are regular and unobtrusively pretty : her appearance is always neat—though perhaps you do not appreciate the importance of such a detail in married life ? She is made to smile at the right moment and never to say

what is inappropriate. She is there when he wants her : when he craves solitude she is about her household tasks. She knows nothing of philosophy—how could she, being a machine?—yet her countenance can appear profound : and she allows him to talk. The young man is happy.'

The Imp seemed absorbed in his reflections. 'I think I must pay them a visit,' he remarked after a pause. 'How long have they been married?'

'A year to-morrow,' said the Fairy.

'And he never forgets that she is a mere combination of wheels and springs?'

'No, indeed. Regularity is among his virtues. Any forgetfulness would be disastrous. You understand that I could not trust so delicate a mechanism to any but the most reliable hands.'

The Imp was again silent. 'Ha, ha,' he laughed all at once. 'How very amusing. I must really pay them a visit. Can you let me have the address?' The Small Demon knew the March Wind, which is the wind of adventure, and he looked in on him on his way. 'It is most preposterous to let it go on,' he observed after telling him the story. 'Won't you see what you can do?'

'I'll see to it, of course,' said the March Wind. 'You're jolly well right—they'll be turning us all into machinery next. I'll go at once.' With a scatter of dust and a slamming of windows he dashed round the corner where the young man tended his rockery.

'Come along,' said the March Wind. 'Do you know there is such a thing as the country? Come away from bricks.'

The young man looked up. It was the first blue day of the year, deeper than summer. Clouds billowed across it, white and big-bellied like laundry in the breeze. A dead leaf rapped on its branch : 'Rat-tat-tat, I must leave this ; I'm going to the country' ; it hurled itself like a dancing dervish towards the shining clouds.

'I think I might take a stroll now,' said the young man to himself.

The Wind led him, disappearing round corners with little puffs and shudders. They came to a long road. The houses grew scarce. There were chicken-runs, and ducks and geese on commons or in the ditches—till the bricks stopped altogether.

Then the Wind began to sing with the breath of things that grow. It caught the young man by the shoulders and turned him loose in the fields. It showed him primroses where the ground is damp and sunny. It turned over the dry grass under the hawthorns and found violets. The young man discovered the smell of living

earth, and saw how the corn-blade comes up folded through the loam.

They reached the lower hills and brushwood shoulders, full of moist brakes and hollows, and wandered there a long while. The Wind ran hither and thither, laughing to itself. A child with blue eyes came through a gate, leading two sheep: she brought the young man milk in a brown mug, and watched him solemnly, holding her pennies. At last the evening gathered, with stars through a thin mist. They grew brighter every minute. The March Wind sank down suddenly; it crept close to the young man like a dog, and nestled in a hollow beside him. 'A glorious day,' said the Wind. 'Let us lie down now and sleep.'

Then the young man came to himself. He remembered that he had an engagement that evening. He then remembered his wife. She would be waiting for him—the table laid, the dinner ready; ready now, he realised. She would ask no questions; she was so tactful; she would look at him with the most amiable kindness. He must hurry back: good heavens! he *must* hurry: he might be too late: that fragile, adorable mechanism! . . . it was late even now . . . He rushed away, stumbling over tufts of grass to reach the lane and the highway beyond.

It was an unending business. Some seizure of forgetfulness must have been upon him to make him come so far! He found the road, now running along in a whiteness of its own, independent of night—a dim atmosphere in which the milestones were illegible. They seemed centuries apart. Long before the first lamp-post hove in sight the sky was like black enamel, glittering with stars.

He opened his door with a shaking hand. She was there, motionless by the fire: still smiling, but quite stiff. He gazed on her in despair. He touched her arm, and the joint moved with a horrible mechanical jar that made him shudder. She must have run down hours before—and alas! he knew well that all repairs were useless. In this supreme moment his philosophy forsook him.

When the Imp heard of it, he was highly amused and delighted with the whole episode. 'It would never have done, you know,' said he to the Fairy Godmother. 'Too dangerous a precedent altogether. But I could find it in my heart to be sorry for that expensive machine.'

'Oh, what does she matter?' said the Fairy. 'She has been thrown on to the rubbish heap. I am disappointed in the carelessness of the world.'

'Well, well,' said the Demon. 'Fairy Godmothers must get used to disappointments. And it doesn't do to trust too absolutely to the good young men. They are sure to be absent-minded sooner or later.'

Italy.

CARRIGOONA.

To M. L. O.

I WALKED one day on Carrigoona Hill,
From East to West the lovely summits rose
Crag upon crag;—and, in the distance, still
Glimmerings of light, where hidden sunshine glows.
Within my ears the sound of murmuring rills,
The flame of yellow gorse beneath my feet;
Purple and blue upon the distant hills,
And darkness, where the sky and mountain meet.

Oh Carrigoona, when my soul is dry,
And Hope lies crushed beneath a passing pain,
I'll see thy rainbow flung across the sky,
And thy Sun glittering through the curtained rain.

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EILY ESMONDE.

THE BOY AT NIGHT.

BY FRANCES WOODHOUSE.

THE flowering of Mrs. Thorne's syringa happened every summer in the garden like the Season in London. It was in leaf, it was in bud, the first spray was out, it was in flower, it was in full bloom, it was—well, yes, perhaps it was just beginning to go off a little. You should have seen it a week ago. And always with the flowering of the syringa the herbaceous border reached its prime, that blue-and-golden moment that was for Mrs. Thorne and Agnes the crisis of the year. No other time in the whole flower-emblazoned spring and summer was quite so glorious; the herbaceous border glowing in June against its background of syringa bushes made a garden in which Solomon and all his glory would have been humbled to the dust.

They did their own gardening, Mrs. Thorne and Agnes. At all seasons of the year they were to be seen in the garden in their dirty old gardening clothes, side by side or at least within sight of each other, Mrs. Thorne looking untidy and busy and adorable, Agnes just looking untidy. Everyone loved Mrs. Thorne because she was a perfect darling and everyone liked Agnes because she was rather a dear—'when you get to know her,' people would add; and as nobody really knew her there was nobody to contradict it; everyone was content to take Mrs. Thorne's word for her. . . . And 'Agnes is so restful,' Mrs. Thorne would say with a grateful sigh, or, 'Agnes will get it down for you, she can reach anything,' or 'Agnes's watch is right, I think you'll find.' She was always quoting Agnes—'Agnes thought so-and-so quite charmingly pretty,' . . . 'Agnes said the colour was so refreshing,' . . . for ever fluting out with a grace-note the thing that when Agnes had said it had been flat and tuneless; for ever sketching a background of harmonious right-thinking into the Portrait of a Dark, Dull Woman that the name of Agnes was apt to conjure up. For the name of Agnes was a secret sign between Mrs. Thorne and Mrs. Thorne's soul; it meant 'I am safe with friends,' or rather, 'Am in touch with reinforcements, can carry on.' And to turn to the thought of Agnes was for her like shaking up a cushion to lean back on, not

a luxurious cushion but one that comfortably filled the hollow place in a chair that had always been too big. She had never heard the phrase 'that great lump of an Agnes,' and would not have understood it if she had. Agnes had heard it—by accident, of course—and understood it very well.

The gardens in the village had water within easy reach, a well or the millstream or even, in the case of the Rectory, a tap outside the greenhouse. But perched in their small snug house half-way up the hill with the road going steeply down past their front gate, the Thornes had to pump even the water for the house and in long hot summers there was little water to spare for the garden unless it were fetched from the stream at the bottom of the hill. And fetched it had to be this summer after a rainless May. It was Agnes, of course, who fetched it; she was square-shouldered and strong, and day after day in the cool of early morning she toiled up and down the footpath across three fields, spending for thankless delphiniums the strength that no one else required of her. When evening came they would water the garden together.

They were watering the garden when the Accident happened. Mrs. Thorne was trickling out to each plant its ration and Agnes was filling the watering-cans from the tub she had filled that morning, slopping the water a little with each can and wetting her shoes. Mrs. Thorne's hair was sweetly ruffled and Agnes had lank straight wisps against hot cheeks; every now and then they straightened their backs and smiled at each other and sniffed the syringa-laden air. And there was a sudden loud appalling noise at the garden gate and they ran out and found the accident.

The little car, swerving on the hill to avoid a dog, had run up the bank and turned over on top of its occupant, a youth of seventeen or so, who, ignoring the alarm, the obstruction of the highway, the engine still running and all the commotion, lay calm and senseless on the ground in the shadow of the syringa at the gate. Eager first-aiders, appearing from nowhere, dragged him clear of the car and, at once egged on and hindered by fluttering Mrs. Thorne, carried him into her house. He lay unconcernedly upon the spare-room bed while Mrs. Thorne continued to flutter like a distracted goldfinch and Agnes moved heavily about under the direction of the inevitable, invaluable someone who knew just what to do and told everyone to do it. And when the belated doctor had discovered that the damage went no further than bad bruises and not very bad concussion and offered to transfer the patient to the

Cottage Hospital, Mrs. Thorne would not hear of having him moved, assuring everyone that he was no trouble.

No one was ever a trouble to Mrs. Thorne, not only because she was inordinately kind-hearted but because any trouble that began by being hers automatically and immediately became someone else's, Agnes's, for instance, or the maids', or even the Rector's. She might as easily have taken in twelve victims of a charabanc disaster, all having hæmorrhage and hysterics, and still quite truthfully have asserted that they were no trouble. Someone would have come forward to fulfil her obligations, even as the Rector was at this moment making enquiries and communications and the district nurse was installing herself as day nurse and Agnes in her timid ponderous way was offering to sit with the boy at night.

But the boy was no trouble, even to Agnes. He was already sleeping when she came on duty and had since moved and spoken only once to ask for a drink of water. It was now midnight and she sat in darkness; even candlelight meant either closed windows or the endless blundering invasions of moths and she did not want to read or sew, it was not after all so very difficult to keep awake. . . . She had never before in all her thirty-seven years sat up all night alone like this, never known before how beautiful the night could be. Since nine o'clock she had watched the midsummer dusk deepen gradually into darkness, a clouded darkness faintly sprinkled with stars; she had seen what in daylight had been garden, hedge and meadow minute by minute give up their separate identity to be one and indivisible with night. Lines softened, melted; colour dimmed to dense or thinner shadow; elms across the road were not elms but rugged blackness; beneath the window the vain-glorious whiteness of lilies was humbled to a blur. Somewhere water babbled, but not as water, it was the voice of undivided earth. She found a deep contentment in this intimacy with darkness, this sense of being a chosen witness of what others, sleeping, would never know.

The bed creaked and there was a sigh; the boy was groping for a drink. Agnes was lost again in self-distrust as she remembered her duties as a nurse. She got up and went to the bedside almost unwillingly. But it was easy after all.

'No, don't sit up. There. No more?'

'No. Thanks awfully.' He lay still again. She put down the

cup and went back to her place at the window, hoping he would sleep.

But he lay awake, his eyes on the dark figure at the window. Conscious but still confused in mind he did not want to examine his circumstances; it was enough for the present to know that he was in bed, ill, in a strange house, at night, with a strange woman sitting at his window, a massive, slow-moving woman with a deep, husky voice. He accepted her vaguely as part of the adventure that had befallen him. . . . Only she was so still and so mysterious that he rather doubted if she were real. By degrees his doubt became the focus of his bewildered thoughts and Agnes, believing him asleep again, was once more startled by his voice.

'What's your name?'

'Agnes Thorne.'

'Agnes,' said the boy, lingeringly, 'Agnes,' trying the sound in search of familiarity. Agnes had never before been aware of grace and dignity in her Christian name.

'Agnes,' he said to himself again thoughtfully. Then 'What's the time?'

'It will soon be two o'clock. Can't you go to sleep?'

'I've been asleep,' he answered, disposing of the question, but he was quiet again.

Already the night was changing, becoming at once less still and yet more tense. The air took on a freshness that stirred at last to the beginning of a breeze. The boy spoke again.

'What's that smell?'

'That's the syringa.' What was that word that meant a sweet smell and something more, the word that had a little wind blowing through it. 'Fragrant,' she added, without self-consciousness. 'The fragrant syringa.'

'Agnes syringa,' said the boy musingly, and silence fell between them as if they had come to the end of an earnest and uplifting conversation.

A clock in the sleeping house struck two; the gloom of the room began to thin a little. From time to time Agnes heard her patient move and knew he was awake, but he said no more until three struck and far down in the village a cock crew. Then he spoke.

'Nearly morning.'

'Nearly morning,' answered Agnes and together they waited. Slowly the garden became aware of the day; the world resolved once more into competent parts. Elms, the garden hedge, the tall

syringa bushes again took up their lives. The sky lightened, grey paled to faintest blue. The east changed, and changed again, and glowed with the sun.

The boy was asleep.

Late in the morning the doctor came and dragged from Agnes by questions an informal, equivocal report. 'That hulking great Agnes,' he thought, and pitied the patient. The day was unbearably hot, blazing all morning, sunless and breathless in the afternoon. Long before sunset the sky was thick and sullen. 'Thunder,' said everyone. 'Thunder before to-morrow.'

The patient had had a miserable day; he was beginning to feel his injuries and the heat increased his discomfort, and, young enough still to be a slave to good form, he found it difficult to be helpless and to suffer in a strange house where one expected oneself to be reserved and polite. He had been well enough early in the day to give a clear account of himself and to attempt apologies and thanks, but towards evening he grew restless and taciturn and the nurse reported him to Agnes as not so well.

'Still, you can't do anything for him except keep him quiet,' she said, eyeing her distrustfully. Agnes, entering the sick-room with awkwardly elaborate care, was thankful to find him asleep again.

He did not sleep for long but seemed reassured when he opened his eyes to see the large dark woman at his window again. 'Agnes,' he said at once, with satisfaction in his voice. . . . He had relapsed into a certain degree of fever and dozing fitfully till midnight was again not sure if she were real or a figure from the crowded, shadowy dreams into which his conscious thought repeatedly dissolved, but he found her presence comforting and was encouraged, as he grew more wakeful, to take full advantage of it. . . . Never had Agnes felt so adequate; his wants were so simple, so easily fulfilled, her services so perfectly taken for granted. But at midnight he was wide awake.

'You must try to keep still, you know, and go to sleep again.'

'It's so hot.'

'That's the thunder; there's thunder coming.'

Her matter-of-factness helped him more than sympathy. It hurt him to move; it was impossible to lie still; his head throbbed unbearably and the heat was stifling; still, no doubt it was part of the programme; she seemed to know. So he endured with tense patience while Agnes watched the sullen night.

Sheet lightning flickered at intervals over the sky, hardly lighting so much as disturbing the darkness. The night threatened, the garden waited in fear, the air was full of punishment. Sheet lightning flickered again, showing grim black trees, a meaningless gate, blind lilies. A faint breeze wandered forebodingly through the dark. Then came a double-forked brilliant flash, a pause, and a sudden crash of noise, a stunning cataclysmic fall of sound, pounding, rattling and rumbling in one huge attack. It lasted for ever, lapsed into muttering, and died.

'What a peal!' said Agnes.

That was what it was, of course, a peal of thunder. The boy's mind crawled out of the terror and pain that had swamped it, only to be submerged again. A treble crash assaulted the night, fury battered on fury above the defenceless house. To the invalid sound and agony were one; Agnes, herself half-deafened, heard him cry out her name, found herself standing over him, holding both his hands in hers. 'It's all right,' she said, 'it's all right, it's nearly over,' and as the peal rumbled itself out, 'Now we'll have had the worst of it.'

Her triteness restored his reason; he felt safe with her; his confidence justified a moment later by the faintness of the next peal, mere half-hearted commonplace thunder. She held the cup of water and he drank submissively and let her shake and straighten the pillows in which he had tried to bury his head. 'Now we shall have the rain,' she said, going back to her place at the window. 'Rain,' he thought; rain was cool and washed things away; rain was coming; she knew about it; she was sitting at the window waiting for it. He lay still, so that the pain of his head should steady and die away to an ache again and waited with Agnes for the rain.

The long blank moments went heavily by. The air grew cooler. There came the first slow patter of big drops, and the rain began. . . .

Grey light crept into the room. It was so cool now that Agnes shivered. The boy slept, breathing deeply; his hair was rumpled above his bandage; his lips pouted a little, like a baby's. Agnes spread the discarded blanket over him with tender, clumsy hands.

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The boy's mother came, gracious, competent, possessive. There was no longer any need for nurses. She knew what was due to the

Thornes and let her courtesy expand into a lovely friendliness; she had a radiant charm of manner that became for Mrs. Thorne one of her happiest memories. But that same charm overwhelmed Agnes, who was lumpish and inarticulate, awkwardly carrying trays. 'That great Agnes person,' the boy's mother called her, to the boy.

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The boy and his mother were going; the car would come for them at five. They were all having tea together in the drawing-room which was full of flowered cretonne and sweet peas. The elder women talked quietly and incessantly, their conversation sounding like the dripping of a tap, which was Mrs. Thorne's voice, into deep cool water, which was her guest's. Agnes, who was pouring out, spoke only when her mother appealed to her. The boy was silent but restless, straining his ears for the sound of the car, longing to be away. He was so sick of it all, the little, bright, fluttering woman, the tight little house, the garden all muffled in syringa. He missed the taste of life, his mind was stale; the painful but stimulating adventure of being the victim of an accident had petered out into the tedium of not feeling quite well. . . . He made no effort to add to the conversation; his mother had contrived to diffuse about him an atmosphere of special dispensation in which he sheltered thankfully from the necessity of talking to Mrs. Thorne. As for that Agnes woman that his mother so much disliked, to talk to her would have been impossible, hotly conscious as he was of having used her Christian name with freedom during the first two nights of his illness. Exactly what sort of a fool he had made of himself on the night of the thunderstorm he dared not try to remember, but his social conscience pricked him; he was vaguely aware of obligations in the Agnes quarter that were going to make it difficult to say an adequate and graceful good-bye.

He glanced furtively across to where she sat behind the teapot in a bunched summer dress of the wrong shade of blue. She sat very still, gazing abstractedly out of the window; her face in repose had a sort of dignified melancholy. And watching her he remembered suddenly the woman who had sat at his window in the dark; his vague misgivings were pushed aside by vivid recollection of her voice answering him through darkness, of the thunder and the rain that followed and their strange intimacy. Looking up she caught his glance and somehow with a queer flash of understanding he knew that she was not large but small, she was

not massive but frail, that she looked at him not from behind the teapot but from some dim, hardly safe retreat. . . .

The car had come, they rose, there was a welter of good-byes in which everyone was implicated and a fuss that drifted through the hall and down the garden. Mrs. Thorne chirped and fluttered, maids helped the chauffeur with luggage, the boy's mother shepherded the boy, who was passive but uneasy as though he had forgotten something. Agnes had remained in the drawing-room. The path at the garden gate was white with syringa petals. . . . 'Your beautiful syringa, Mrs. Thorne, falling at last.'

The boy turned back.

'What is it, dear? something you've forgotten?' called his mother, but he was out of reach. He ran back to the drawing-room; Agnes was standing in the middle of the room; she looked at him, startled, almost scared.

'It's all right,' he said, 'only I didn't—I thought I hadn't said good-bye.' He took her hand awkwardly. 'Good-bye.' He wanted to say something funny and apologetic about being afraid of thunder, but he could think of nothing; they stood there together for a dumb, ridiculous moment. And suddenly, mischievously, he smiled. 'Good-bye, Agnes Syringa,' he said, and jerking forward he kissed her cheek and was gone.

Mrs. Thorne waved the car away and went on waving to a retreating cloud of dust. Then she turned away with a little happy sigh and fetched a basket and some scissors and knelt at the edge of the herbaceous border, snipping off dead pinks. Presently Agnes came and knelt beside her with a larger basket and an older pair of scissors.

'A charming woman,' said Mrs. Thorne. 'A charming, charming woman and a dear boy. Wasn't he a dear boy, Agnes? And what was so nice, they saw the garden at its best. Its very best. Didn't they, Agnes?'

'Yes,' said Agnes absently. 'Its very best.' And she knew, as she knelt down a little clumsily and began to snip, that the best was over. The summer would come again and again, the syringa flower and fall, countless delphiniums drink from her hand, but this year had seen the flowering of all years, and all the water she was to fetch and carry in a long life held in a single cup and offered and drunk. Slowly she turned her treasure over, harvest of all the summers, storing it for the autumn and the long winter to come.

AN OVERLOOKED TERCENTENARY.

BY NELSON COLLINS.

AT Hodgson's auction rooms in Chancery Lane one day last year an unusually fresh copy of William Habington's *Castara* in the second edition sold for two pounds. Some months later I tried to trace that copy and found it had gone to America. 'A cheap book at two pounds,' said Mr. McLeish, who had bid it in, 'and I let a regular customer have it at a small advance to fill out his American orders in seventeenth-century poetry. Doubtless any other edition and any other copy would have served him as well.' The only other time I had handled a copy of that second edition, five or six years ago, it was priced at twelve or fourteen pounds, I forget which. Either price, that of the boom days in the book-auction rooms or this of depression times, is a sizable sum; but nobody you meet ever seems to know or care much about William Habington.

The histories of English poetry are singularly silent about him. There were three editions of his poems in the 1630's and 1640's, somebody troubled to issue an edition at Bristol in 1812, and Professor Arber made the poems one of his *Arber Reprints* in 1870. It is odd that Louise Imogen Guiney with her questing flair for all corners in seventeenth-century poetry should have missed writing about him. Down at Hindlip Church, that you reach by pleasant wandering footpaths running into each other across fields and through hedges an hour out of Worcester city, neither parson nor sexton knew even that he was buried in the church when I went there in the summer of 1934.

Such slight notice as he has been accorded when he had any at all is for the *Castara* poems, in which he anticipated Coventry Patmore's celebration of love in marriage. The new *Oxford Book of Seventeenth-Century Verse* includes three of these poems among its excellent six hundred. Yet he probably is much more noteworthy, is really noteworthy, both in poetry and in the history of poetry, for a group of eight elegies on the death of his cousin, 'The Funerals of the Honourable, my best friend and kinsman, George Talbot, Esquire.' These appeared first in 1635, added on in the second edition of *Castara*, so this year of 1935 is the ter-

centenary of a 'moment' in the history of English literature that should have more recognition than it seems likely to receive.

The 'Funerals of . . . George Talbot' are, I believe, the first complete elegy in the English language. That is prestige enough for an English poet, reason enough for tercentennial commemoration. The elegy as a distinct 'type' of the literary art has never been satisfactorily isolated. Both Schiller in his *Elegische Dichtung* and Coleridge in his *Table-talk* express a dissatisfaction with the muddled sense of the term 'elegy.' 'I may not avoid this question,' wrote Schiller in 1795, 'since . . . in the elegiac field are found masterpieces which are of a nature quite different . . . and which appear to recommend and to defend quite another class.' It is a great deal to be able to say for Habington that he achieved first of all in English literature the fulfilment of a true elegy.

The defining of the mood and mode of elegy, the separation of elegy from the merely elegiac, is a sharpening and defining of a mood and mode in our experience of living. An elegy may thus be shown to be first of all autobiography, an unrecking cry of desolation over a supreme loss by death, that tugs at all the roots of life, and afterwards a range of impassioned speculation in a *necessary* effort to restore validity to human living. A fairly characteristic development of feeling and of thought out of feeling ensues. At length—and the full process is always of considerable duration—comes the sense of solution, or reconciliation, or mere submission, in some sense a final evaluation. These are the elements by which the elegy may be regarded as the Dantean comedy of the soul in its severest trial upon earth.

By such canon the elegy would hesitate in the very act of including 'Lycidas,' the grief and praise and speculation of mere acquaintance, written three years after 'The Funerals' appeared, though it would claim one of its finest fulfilments in 'Epitaphium Damonis,' Milton's poem in Latin on the death of Charles Diodati that he wrote in 1639, four years after 'The Funerals.' It would have no place at all for Gray's supremely elegiac poem or any other merely general meditation and speculation. For the elegy is not epitaph; it is not eulogy; it is not abstract speculation; it is not moderate grief. But the canon accounts for an amazing body of English experience and English poetry. Habington ran its full gamut first.

There is another fact about the elegy that makes Habington's primacy if not his pre-eminence highly significant. The reticence of Englishmen in their emotional life one with another is made

most apparent in English elegies, which are devoted almost exclusively to men. There are noble elegies of women and of children; but the glory of Englishmen's love o' women lies in the English sonnet-sequences. The glory that the nations feel in the story of David and Jonathan lies for English life in the English elegy. In crude terms of quantity, three-quarters of all English elegies are to men. The Habington elegy is in keeping with this inherent tendency and is made all the more striking by his abundant love poems to 'Castara,' his wife.

It is altogether risky in the present trend of poetic fashion to claim attention for Habington by saying that he is at once Patmore and Tennyson in the most striking emotional life of each of them. People are like to be frightened off in these days by the twin affinities more than you may hope to attract them. But the literary relation between 'The Funerals' and 'In Memoriam' is so intimate as to be ransacking; and the purely personal relation of both Hallam and Tennyson to the Habington elegies a hundred years ago, two hundred years after they were written, has a human glow in it. Arthur Hallam gave an oration in Trinity College Chapel on December 16, 1831, and it is printed in his *Prose Remains*. In the course of it he said, 'I would in particular name Habington's *Castara*' (the general title under which the book containing the elegies was always issued) 'as one of those works which make us proud of living in the same land and inheriting the same associations with its true-hearted and simple-minded author.' It is valid to see both the young Tennyson and the young Hallam during their 'four sweet years' together at Cambridge, once they had stumbled on Habington in the browsing pastures of their reading together, attending with satisfaction to the delineation of 'A Friend' in the little introductory prose 'Character' that stands as prelude to 'The Funerals' and to the fervour of the relationship in the elegies themselves. I have seen a copy of the Bristol 1812 edition with an inscription written in it, 'To Memorize Their Friendship this Volume is presented to Wm. Simmons by his Friend & Cousin, Arthur Biggs, 11 Sep. 1818.' If only there might be some record (or the copy itself extant) of Arthur Hallam giving Alfred Tennyson the book, with an equally personal inscription! Anyway, afterwards, constantly all through 'In Memoriam' there are curious verbal resemblances to 'The Funerals' that are echoes, adaptations, and not only coincidences—odd accentuations, obliquities of both emotions and ideas, elaboration of images. All elegies inevitably

touch time and again, from their very nature. Moreover, the Carolinian and the Victorian were at one in a rich conventionalism, a basic assumption that all personal experience evaporates unless it be a part of mankind's unified and transmitted tradition. Yet these similarities of subject-matter and of disposition cannot account for the knitted identities between the first complete English elegy and the greatest English elegy.

The most remarkable exact linear indication of Habington's literary influence upon Tennyson lies, however, outside either 'The Funerals' or 'In Memoriam.' It is in the 'Description of Castara' by Habington and 'Lady Clara Vere de Vere' by Tennyson. Set beside Tennyson's famous four lines these six of Habington's:

Such is her beauty as no arts
Have enriched with borrowed grace.
Her high birth no pride imparts,
For she blushes in her place.
Folly boasts a glorious blood,
She is noblest being good.

Habington had his beginnings with Milton, as he had also the affinity of preoccupation with the moral values of whatever experience aroused him, but the great Master of his generation lived far beyond him. He seemed well-enough content without over-recognition in his own time, and his place in English literature and his implicit candidature for our affection, as for Hallam's, has never, even unto our own time, been adequately evaluated.

The church at Hindlip was lengthened a generation ago. In the reconstruction all beneath the floor was made solid with packed earth and rubble. His grandfather, his father, perhaps his son, lie with him in the embedded vault beneath the church. Hindlip Hall, where he was born and where he lived most of his life, is just across the way from the church. But he has no remembrance in the local country-side; another family name now dominates Hindlip associations, and the poet's name appears only once in the church, as an unemphasised item in a lengthy genealogical table. Most of the church floor is stone or mosaic, but just where the old chancel was located there is only a herring-boned wooden floor. It would not be difficult or expensive, and it would be highly creditable, to observe this tercentenary by excavating beneath the old chancel to the sixteenth-century vault beneath, so as to make accessible once more for the occasional visitor the tomb of Habington, which in all likelihood will be found already suitably inscribed.

TRUE TALES OF AFRICA.

II. THE BOY AND THE LEOPARD.

BY PERCY W. PERRYMAN.

IN 1912 I was on *safari* among the Bagishu of Mount Elgon. This is an interesting tribe of which to tell, not only because they are the people I know best and because, having learnt their language, I was able to get things first hand from them without an interpreter, but because I believe them to be one of the original Bantu tribes and the ancestors of many other better-known tribes. They are the only tribe I know which has no tradition of an early migration from elsewhere. They claim, like the ancient Athenians, to be autochthonous and to have originated where they are now; and it is fairly certain that they have been there for at least 300 years, which is a long time in the history of an African tribe. The country they inhabit is the western and southern half of Mount Elgon, from 4,000 to 8,000 feet. On the west the mountain extends in a series of long ridges like the fingers of a hand, with steep and narrow valleys between them and a steep drop to the plain. On the south the country is more broken and consists of a jumble of hills jammed against a high escarpment, like a crumpled table-cloth and fading gradually to the plain, with one big valley and some smaller ones leading away from the escarpment. The higher parts of the country are still covered with a thick forest, and bamboo above the forest, but the rest of the country is short grass and very thick cultivation. The population has now spread out into the plain, but that is a recent development.

On this *safari* a prisoner was brought to me so swathed in banana-fibre ropes that only his head was visible. On my asking whether he was a murderer or a madman, the chiefs replied 'Neither; he is the friend of Nakibya.' This reply was unintelligible until I elicited the following information:

'Nakibya' was a super-white man, as far above us as we are above the Bagishu. He lived a long way away 'beyond the Kavirondo country,' and excelled in magic. The prisoner had been

there and had seen Nakibya, who promised to come and drive out the white man from Mbale and hand the country back to the Bagishu. When that happened the chiefs would all meet sudden and painful ends. The wish being father to the thought, this doctrine of the advent of 'Nakibya,' the white sorcerer, achieved great popularity in the tribe and the man who brought it back from his travels was a national hero for the time being. From the man himself I could get nothing, except that he had been out to work in Kenya and had recently come back from Kisumu. This in itself was rather an adventure, because in those days few Bagishu had been more than ten miles from their hills. I had to release the man (an action which caused the greatest alarm and despondency among the chiefs) and then set to work to find out more about 'Nakibya.' The man who spread the story had described him as follows :

'Clad in iron from head to foot (Nakibya means 'Mr. Iron').

When he moves a hundred men could not stop him.

His breath burns the grass.

At one drinking he could empty a pond.

He has only one eye, which shines like the moon.

His speech is like the noise of a wounded elephant.'

I confess this defeated me for a long time, until I realised that Nakibya was an engine on the Uganda Railway—an explanation which was found to be correct.

Once only, to my knowledge, has a native claimed to have bewitched me.

The Balucheke clan of Bagishu, owing to the nature of their country—a jumble of steep hills jammed against the great escarpment at the head of the Manafwa valley, with the forest behind—were the last clan to be brought under administrative control. And the last of these hills to be visited by a European was that of a minor chief named Manyu. A predecessor of mine started to climb the hill and was attacked by fever half-way and had to come back. A year later I tried, and was defeated by an abscess which came on suddenly and caused me to be carried back to the station in a hammock. Later I heard that Manyu claimed to have bewitched both of us, and said that any other white man who came near the hill would meet a similar fate. On a subsequent visit I found that his influence had increased enormously. Natives from all parts of Bagishu were flocking to see him and ask his advice, even from clans which were hereditary enemies of the Balucheke. Manyu

himself was credited with miraculous powers, and many Bagishu professed to have been eye-witnesses of his magical feats, which included making a sheep swell up to an enormous size. (Mr. C. W. Hobley attributes to a famous Kikuyu sorcerer an exactly similar feat, which he says was actually witnessed by a European.)

Manyu's daughter was said to be able to run up his spear and balance on the point on one foot, and even disappear in the air like the boy in the Indian rope trick. After collecting a lot of evidence against Manyu I announced my intention of climbing his hill the next day. He replied by sending a message to the effect that if I had not cleared out the next morning he would put a 'medicine' on me which would surpass all previous efforts.

Unfortunately that night I received a telegram which made it urgently necessary to return to the station at once, and the fact that I did so was naturally put down to Manyu's threat. I need hardly add that that part of the district became thoroughly disorganised, until I was able, by making a night march, to appear on top of his hill before anyone knew I had left the station. The sorcerer, unfortunately, was not at home, but his authority waned and he became quite amenable afterwards. Before Manyu's village was burned I asked his daughter, whom we found there, to repeat the spear trick for my edification; a suggestion which she treated with the contempt I suppose it deserved.

It has quite often happened to me to be accused of being concerned in witchcraft by implication. For example, one chief whom I had told to stop cattle crossing a certain ridge during an epidemic of rinderpest complained bitterly afterwards that I had caused his children to fall ill. It appears that the owners of the cattle which were turned back had put a spell on the chief's children, and therefore according to native reasoning I was the person directly responsible.

A very good illustration of the native point of view in these matters was afforded by an old sub-chief, a friend of mine, whom I saw sitting very disconsolate outside his hut when I passed his village in 1918. To my usual question about the crops he replied that his *wimbi* crop had failed and that it was my fault. I found that the local C.M.S. teacher, in his zeal for reform, had persuaded the chiefs (all heathens) to ordain that their people (of whom 99 per cent. were heathens) should not work in their *shambas* on a Sunday. This edict my friend and his women had broken, largely because (as he bitterly explained) they had no means of knowing

when Sunday came round. The teacher had then assured them that the crop planted on a Sunday would fail, and it did. The sub-chief went on—'is not the world too full of demons already, that the white man should bring his own demons here to trouble us?' But he added that he had made it all right for the future, and pointed to a new spirit-house, built on the level space between the huts, next door to the spirit-house belonging to the small-pox god and the one sacred to the evil spirit which causes miscarriage in child-birth. This addition to the family shrines, he explained, was to propitiate 'the demon of the Sunday.' I may add that when I told this story to the Bishop he was not amused.

It must always be remembered by all who have to deal directly with primitive tribes that this witchcraft business is a real and vital thing to them, and that it explains many actions which otherwise would be unaccountable. It is no good laughing at these superstitions, because the native declines to recognise that the white man knows any better, and attaches very little importance to European opinion.

Sir Hugh Clifford has written in connection with witchcraft murders, that 'Belief in the constant intrusion of the supernatural into the affairs of everyday life is a factor that has to be taken into consideration when we are attempting to assess the guilt of persons who, while they have wilfully caused the death of one or more of their neighbours, regard themselves as having acted in the most commonsense or even in the most exemplary manner.'

And this exhortation holds good in considering lesser offences than murder. For instance, you may have a favourite house-boy who has worked for you for years. One day he comes to you and says he wants *ruksha* because his grandmother is ill, or some such story. You naturally think he is tired of work. Both reasons may be true, but what is far more likely to have happened is that he has accidentally broken a tribal tabu, or fallen under a curse. In either alternative there is to him only one natural and proper thing to do, and that is to get clean at once—because of his religion, if he is a pagan, or in spite of his religion, if he is a Christian or Mohammedan. And the necessary ceremonies can only be performed at his own home and by his own people. He won't tell you about it, for three reasons:

- (a) Because he knows the average white man will not understand.
- (b) Because he has a shrewd suspicion that the white man will merely be annoyed.

(c) Because in any case, in a matter of this kind the white man cannot possibly help him.

Here is a story which emphasises, in a native's own words, the idea which is at the root of all witchcraft, and that is that the spirits of the departed can and do interfere actively in the affairs of this world.

Some years ago, when I was on tour in Bagishu and camped at one of the higher camps near the forest, a Mugishu boy was brought to me charged, on his own confession, with killing his uncle. The boy, who was about twelve, obviously thought he had done a fine thing, and had no hesitation in giving a full account of the affair. The following is his statement, taken down as he made it and not altered in any way :

“My father Nakimolo paid six head of cattle, three goats, two sheep, five fowls and a spear when he married my mother. He got one heifer back, as is the custom. My father's half-brother Wambede had a bull, which was herded with my father's cows. My father had only five head, so when he was arranging the marriage with my mother's people he went to Wambede and said, “Lend me your bull to help me pay for the woman, and when I get the heifer back I will give you the first heifer calf it bears in return for your bull.” Wambede agreed. So the bull went to Wanzoiya, my mother's father, and the heifer came back to us. First of all it had a bull calf. My father killed it, and divided the meat with Wambede.

“Then it had a heifer calf, and my father called his half-brother and said, “This calf is yours ; when it is old enough you can take it.” Wambede agreed. So he took the heifer calf, and used it to pay a debt. Then my father's cow had another bull calf, and Wambede came to him and said, “Give it to me, I have another debt and they want to tie me up.” So my father gave him the calf. Then my father's cow died and he sent the meat to my mother's people.

“Now my mother had two children only, me and my sister. When my sister was nearly old enough to be married a Mukigai came and agreed to marry her. My father said, “Pay me two cows now and when you marry her you can pay me two more and some goats.” So the Mukigai agreed and he paid two cows. Then Wambede came to my father and said, “I claim half of your daughter, for when you married her mother you gave my bull to her people.” But my father was angry, and said, “Our debt is

finished, you have had a heifer, and a bull, and half the meat of the bull we killed." So Wambede went away, but he came many times and at last my father gave him one of the cows he had from the Mukigai.

' When my sister was married the Mukigai paid two more cows and four sheep. Then Wambede came back and said, " Give me another cow and two sheep, for half the girl belongs to me." My father was angry and drove him away. But he came again many times to our hut, and each time he and my father quarrelled.

' Then one night he came and tried to steal a cow by digging into the hut. My father heard him and went out with his spear, and I went out too, for I was in the same hut. My father called out, " Who is there ? " and then we saw Wambede by the grain store. My father was angry and said, " Have you come to steal my cows ? " But Wambede said nothing. So my father said, " Go home now, and in the morning I will tell the chief that you are a thief, and he will send you to the white man." So my father turned to go back to the hut, and then Wambede ran up and speared him in the back and my father fell down. Now I saw this, and I raised the call for help and many people came, but Wambede had gone. But my father died that night.

' The next day my mother's people came, and my father's other brothers, for the death wail, and when they had all drunk beer my mother rose and said, " Who will pay me for my husband ? " But my father's brothers said, " When a brother kills his brother, who can pay anything ? Wambede has no cows left, he has spent them all." So they all spoke many words, and on the next day my mother's people came to her and said, " Your husband's brothers will pay nothing and we cannot make them." So my mother said to me, " Go to the Muganda and ask him to take you to the chief." So I went to the Muganda and he heard my words and wrote them in a book, and then he went with me to the chief. But we found the chief drinking with many people. First the Muganda spoke and then I spoke. So the chief finished his beer, and then he said, " Wambede killed Nakimolo, his brother. We are Bakiga, but your mother and her people are Balucheke. If a Mukiga kills a Mukiga it is not right that we should pay cows to the Balucheke." So the Muganda said to the chief, " The Government will be angry if you do not catch Wambede." But the chief said, " Where shall I find Wambede ? He has gone to Buyobo." And he said to me, " Bring me a heifer and I will try and find Wambede."

'So I went back and told my mother, and she wept and said, "I have lost my husband, shall I lose my cows as well?" So we waited many days and many times I went to the chief and to the Muganda, but they said, "Wambede is afraid, he is living in the forest." The Muganda said, "Wait, I have sent a letter to the white man, and he will catch Wambede." But I thought many things in my heart, and I said, "How does it profit us if the white man catches Wambede? He will take him away and make him work for the white man and my father is dead."

'Then my mother said, "Go to Wambalili, the witch-doctor, he will help you." So I went to Wambalili. He is a very old man, and before the white men came he was the greatest witch-doctor of all the Balucheke. So I took a sheep and went to him. First he killed the sheep, and then he put the entrails into a pot of water, and put it on the fire. Then he took three egg-shells and some feathers and put them into the pot. Then he took the pot off the fire and smeared some of the entrails on his forehead. Then we ate the sheep. Then he said, "This matter is between you and Wambede. Your mother's father, Wanzoia, is dead, and her people have no heart in them. The chief wants to help his own people, and your father's brothers have given him a bull. But I see that you should kill Wambede. He is in the forest, near the rock Zesui; he is afraid that the Government will catch him. Take your father's spear and go after him, and when you find him, spear him as he speared your father. But near Zesui you will see a big leopard. Do not be afraid of it, for it is not a leopard, it is your mother's father, Wanzoia, and he will help you find Wambede." Then he gave me one of the egg-shells to wear and I went away.

'Two nights I slept at my mother's and the third day I went to look for Wambede. My mother cooked the meat of a sheep, and ground millet, and I took it with me. So I took my father's spear and went to the mountains. The first night I slept in the forest behind Wamozo's hill. The second night I went higher up towards Zesui. Many times I climbed trees to look for the smoke of a fire. That day I saw smoke a long way off, and went to it, for I thought "Perhaps Wambede is there." But it was some other men digging for rats, whom I did not know. So I went away quietly and climbed higher.

'That night I slept in the hollow of a big tree and there was a small fire on the ground in front. In the hour before the dawn

I awoke and saw the other side of the fire a large leopard. At first I was afraid, for it was a big leopard, and very thin. But then I remembered the words of Wambalili and said, "This is not a leopard, it is my mother's father, Wanzoiya, and he has come to help me." The leopard came close to the fire and looked across it towards me, and yawned. So I said to the leopard, "Wanzoiya, help me to find Wambede, that I may kill him." So the leopard turned round and I followed it. It went up towards Zesui, and when the sun came up I lost it. But I looked on the ground and saw a man's tracks by the side of the leopard's. So I knew they were Wambede's.

'All that day I followed the tracks, until they came to a stream, and at first I was in doubt, but I said to myself, "He cannot cross this stream, for he has already crossed two others, and a man who has killed another man cannot cross three streams or he will get fever." So I walked in the stream and found the tracks again, on the same side. Then I found a place where Wambede had been digging for rats, so I dug too and found a rat, and I ate it, for my food was gone. The next day I found a cave, and inside the cave I found ashes of a fire, and part of a monkey which Wambede had killed. So I ate that. Outside the cave I saw the tracks of a large leopard, and I knew that Wanzoiya was with me. It had rained in the night and the tracks were plain. So I went up out of the forest into the bamboo, but first I found some honey and ate it.

'After I had climbed many hours in the bamboo I saw smoke in front, so I went very carefully and came to an open part where Wambede was. He had made a hut of bamboos, and he sat outside cooking a rat, with his back against a tree. He knew that someone was following him, for he had cut dry bamboos and spread them over the clearing, and always he looked round to see who was coming. So I waited until the sun went down, very quiet, for I thought "He will sleep in his hut and I will spear him through the side." But he did not sleep in the hut, he slept against the tree with the fire in front of him. But I waited and lit no fire, and watched Wambede. For many hours I waited, and Wambede put more wood on the fire every hour, and sometimes he took his spear and went round the hut, for he knew someone was following him.

'But at the hour before the dawn his fire went low and I went up very quietly to the tree. Wambede did not hear me, and I came to the tree behind him. Then I trod on a dry bamboo and it cracked, and Wambede woke up. Then I thought "Now he will

kill me, for he is a strong man and I am a boy." But Wambede did not look round for me, he looked across the fire and I looked and saw the leopard Wanzoiya. The leopard came close to the fire, looked at Wambede and yawned at him, and he bent forward to seize his spear, for his spear was standing in front by the fire. So as he bent forward I came from behind the tree and struck with my spear, and my spear entered his back and came out near the navel, and Wambede fell into the fire. Then I came round and took Wambede's spear, and passed it through his throat, and he died. But the leopard had gone.'

LONDONDERRY.

THE saddest of all songs that ever were :

A nation mourning for its great days done ;

A lorn soul wailing from some deep despair :

All find in thee their music. Here is one—

.

A night of stars !—The broad-domed shimmery skies

Brood o'er the darkness of the little bay :

There, with its twinkling lights, the village lies ;

Here, the black headland stretches far away.

A night of stars !—But now, a sad wind passed,

Like a lost spirit sighing ' Never more ' :

A lull, a hush :—then, on the silence vast,

The soft, slow ripple, falling along the shore.

A night of stars !—Ah me, my friend, my friend !

A night of stars—of stars and whispering sea !

A night of stars !—So this is then the end

Of all that ever was 'twixt me and thee !

C. H. ST. L. RUSSELL.

MR. RIBS: A BUSH BABY.

BY DENIS TOWNLEY.

'WILL you be going into town this week? The night ape is out of peach jam,' said my boss's wife on our tobacco farm.

Have you ever heard of *Galago cassiendata*—or 'our night ape'?

Take the fur of a chinchilla, and clothe with it a small person the size of a well-grown kitten. Then give him large, wide-awake, batlike ears, short front legs ending in almost human hands furnished with nails as well or better manicured than many a human; hind legs rather like a miniature kangaroo; a bottle-brush tail twice as long as his body; a small, pointed bear-like face and eyes! . . . a monkey's eyes—indescribably sad far-away eyes. The ape's eyes at night cease to seem eyes at all, but in the beam of your torch are transformed into a pair of twin rubies weaving strange patterns in the dark.

Our own Galago, or Night Ape to give him his local name, is known to us as Ribs—short for Ribbon. If you see the connection I can only plead that Southern Rhodesia is still a young, raw colony and our brand of humour is necessarily crude.

Mr. Ribs and I first met in rather sad circumstances. As I am a keen ornithologist I share in common with my brethren of that ilk the habit of keeping a sharp look-out in the trees during the nesting season and thus it chanced that one day I noticed the nest of a Purple-crested Lourie in a thick shade tree on the farm and in the nest a ball of grey fur. As the Galago is a notorious egg-eater I shot this one, but when it fell out of the tree I found to my sorrow that it had been nursing two tiny young ones which were clinging to its back. One of the little ones was dead, but the other—our Mr. Ribs—was quite unhurt.

Poor little fellow! It was a difficult business to disentangle him from his mother, to whom he clung with hands and feet, almost burying himself in her long fur, but in the end I persuaded him to let go and he rode back home with me perched on the palm of my hand alternately nibbling and licking my fingers.

A box was made for the new arrival and filled with cotton-wool,

and Master Ribs was put to bed for the night with the dressed skin of another Galago to keep him company and a hot-water bottle inside it to keep him warm.

Twice during the night our small visitor called out for his mother—giving the proper Lemur-call; a noise vaguely reminiscent of the crowing of a cock. Then he was mute, and mute he has remained ever since, although we have had him with us for more than two years now.

Our first difficulty with Mr. Ribs was to feed him. He was much too small for solid foods and quite incapable of drinking. In the end this problem was solved with a fountain-pen filler filled with milk to the nozzle of which was attached a piece of bicycle valve tubing. At first he seemed to do more gargling than drinking, but in a few days Mr. Ribs developed an astonishing capacity for milk when reckoned in terms of fountain pens and soon learned to lap as well; though somewhat messily at first, owing to his long narrow tongue, designed more for removing insects from small crevices than for the assimilation of liquids.

Then he met Bess—a small, pedigree, wire-haired terrier puppy: gentleness personified, and on friendly terms with all the world and all the animals thereof—except rats. She developed a lurking suspicion that Mr. Ribs was in some way related to a rat. Persuaded that this was not the case, they soon became firm friends and would play for hours together: Mr. Ribs hanging by his hind feet from a chair arm or some convenient hold, and grappling manfully with the pup, usually with both eyes tight shut, his absurd ears folded flat with his head and using as a method of offence and defence a system of 'all-in' wrestling: holds on whiskers, ears, and even teeth.

Every day he became more adventurous, more interesting, more playful in his antics and more omnivorous in his diet—indeed, I am sorry to say that at this time he very nearly became contaminated by civilisation. For several days he joined the Master of the House in that regrettable habit, so rife in the tropics, of taking a 'snort' when the sun is over the yard arm. Brandy was the beverage, though he was not averse to port. However, for some reason he gave up the habit in time, probably owing to an overdose, and now takes nothing but milk. All Galagos seem to be thus addicted to spirits, as in many parts of Africa it is an accepted method of catching them to put a gourd of palm wine beneath the

trees. The unwary Galago climbs down, drinks immoderately, is overcome, and falls to the bag of the wily native.

On the subject of diet Mr. Ribs was far from consistent in his tastes. On one day he would eat several slices of a banana with great enjoyment; on the next he would receive a piece of the same fruit, examine it with a detached air, and cast it disdainfully from him—down your neck, as a rule, if he chanced to be perched on your shoulder.

In the end our Mr. Ribs became a confirmed addict of certain dishes. Of all known jams peach jam alone is certain of a good reception; of all beverages, milk. Apart from these two stand-bys almost any insect proves acceptable: engorged ticks from the puppy, common house flies, grubs, grasshoppers and locusts of any but the highly-coloured varieties, and beetles, scorpions and dozens of other bugs. He will touch no meat save that of one species of nocturnal lizard, one species of dormouse and young fledgling birds. Of course, Mr. Ribs has many other articles of diet too numerous to mention; in fact, one is sometimes reminded of the white elephant of Stephen Leacock whose diet ranged from glass bottles to bibles. To mention a single instance of this variety of tastes: some week ago I was awakened from a vivid dream of being chased by gorillas in the Congo forests to find Mr. Ribs gambolling round the beams of the roof of my bedroom (which does not boast a ceiling) dragging behind him a bunch of small turnips, or rather of the tops of turnips, having consumed the turnips themselves.

Mr. Ribs is not talkative. He has only been known to give voice to four different notes. The first is very like the growling of a domestic cat and is used, I think, purely for intimidation, and only from some safe and unassailable perch in times of danger. The second is a very soft and gentle grunt which he will make to attract your attention when he comes into your room at night or greets you on emerging in the evening. The third is difficult to describe; perhaps the best way of doing so is by means of a simile. You are probably familiar with the spring note of the cuckoo and with the cuckoo's note in August. Our Mr. Ribs' third note is to the proper night ape call, which I described at the beginning of this article, just as the summer note of the cuckoo is to the real breeding note of the bird in the spring. When our Mr. Ribs gives tongue on this note, one's first impulse is to run and pat him on the back or do whatever is necessary for a small night ape throwing

a fit—a most distressing noise. I suppose the real explanation of this note can be given in one word, immaturity; and when our Mr. Ribs bursts into his full song we must expect to lose a valued friend.

Lastly, but not leastly, we must go into the many and diverse postures which Mr. Ribs will assume in the course of his ordinary activities.

He is far from being at home on the ground and there is nothing that he hates more than the necessity of crossing an open space. After much waiting and listening and many false starts he will suddenly make up his mind and start on his journey, usually at quite a slow walk. Then some noise or suspicious movement will frighten him and he will break into the most extraordinary gait imaginable. Four steps on all four feet, a jump on to his hind legs, then another leap almost vertically into the air with arms outstretched horizontally from the shoulders. Another four steps, another vertical leap, and so on, achieving, at the expense of this tremendous energy, a speed of perhaps five miles per hour. But when he reaches the tree that is his objective, it is a very different story. He is up the tree in a flash and out on to the thinnest branches. Then, perhaps, a leap of fifteen or twenty feet to the next tree and a more leisurely exhibition of acrobatics amongst its branches while he searches for insects in the bark and foliage. He is quite as much at home upside down under a branch as right way up and is indeed exceedingly fond of hanging by his hind feet or perhaps by one hind foot for several minutes on end from a suitable branch or from the eaves of the house: his arms hanging straight down and his small head swivelling round in an uncanny manner as he views his inverted world at all points of the compass.

When our Mr. Ribs was very young he had the same habit that can be observed in any kitten. The trick of turning the head sideways to view an object more carefully. I have never heard an explanation of this habit and certainly have no explanation of my own to offer, but I have noted one significant fact. The one bird and the two animals which are most addicted to the habit—that is the owl, the cat and the lemur—are all nocturnal.

So far as I know our Mr. Ribs is, as a pet, unique. There are quite a number of the smaller species of *Galago* kept in captivity in Rhodesia and elsewhere, but I think that I am correct in claiming that there is no other specimen of *G. cassiendata*—I will not

say 'in captivity' because our Mr. Ribs was allowed his freedom as soon as he became agile enough to look after himself.

Sometimes he will stay away as long as two days and two nights, but always, up till now, on the third night has come a gentle grunt from the surrounding darkness, a dim shape materialising soundlessly at the head of your bed and an impatient paw patting you gently through the mosquito net.

There will come a day of course when we shall lose him. There will come a night when there is no small form to tap one through the net, no small grunts saying 'Here I am again. Let me in quick.' There will be a little jar of milk filled in vain for many nights until it is finally put away, and a tin of peach jam going mouldy on the top of the wardrobe. Southern Rhodesia is a cruel country for small defenceless beasts and we shall never know his fate. Perhaps it is as well. One would like to be able to think that he had gone back to the wild again and to his own kind, but I fear that he has been with us too long now for that. Probably some mangy night-prowling kaffir dog or marauding wild cat—a futile flight with that pathetic hop-skip-and-jump and then a small ball of mangled, blood-stained fur that was our Mr. Ribs.

BLUEBEARD'S DAUGHTER.

BY SYLVIA TOWNSEND WARNER

EVERY child can tell of his ominous pigmentation, of his ruthless temper, of the fate of his wives and of his own fate, no less bloody than theirs; but—unless it be here and there a Director of Oriental Studies—no one now remembers that Bluebeard had a daughter. Amid so much that is wild and shocking this gentler trait of his character has been overlooked. Perhaps the slender figure of Djamileh has been obscured by the flounces of her many stepmothers; perhaps, rather than spoil the symmetry of a bad husband by an admission that he was a good father, historians have suppressed her. In any case, Djamileh is a neglected heroine, and I have heard her very existence denied, on the grounds that none of Bluebeard's wives lived long enough to bear him a child. This shows what it is to give a dog a bad name. To his third wife, the mother of Djamileh, Bluebeard was most tenderly devoted, and no shadow of suspicion rested upon her quite natural death in childbed.

From the moment of her birth Djamileh became the apple of Bluebeard's eye. His messengers ransacked Georgia and Circassia to find wet nurses of unimpeachable health, beauty and virtue; her infant limbs were washed in nothing but rosewater, and swaddled in Chinese silks. She cut her teeth upon a cabochon emerald engraved with propitious mottoes, and all the nursery vessels, mugs, platters, ewers, basins and chamber-pots, were of white jade. Never was there a more adoring and conscientious father than Bluebeard, and I have sometimes thought that the career of this much-widowed man was inevitably determined by his anxiety to find for Djamileh an ideal stepmother.

Djamileh's childhood was happy, for none of the stepmothers lasted long enough to outwear their good intentions, and every evening, whatever his occupations during the day, Bluebeard came to the nursery for an hour's romp. But three days before her ninth birthday Djamileh was told that her father was dead; and while she was still weeping for her loss she was made to weep even more bitterly by the statement that he was a bad man and that she must not cry for him. Dressed in crape, with the Bluebeard diamonds

sparkling like angry tears beneath her veils, and wearing a bandage on her wrist, Fatima came to Djamileh's pavilion and paid off the nurses and governesses. With her came Aunt Ann, and a strange young man whom she was told to call Uncle Selim; and while the nurses lamented and packed and the governesses sulked, swooned, and clapped their hands for sherbet, Djamileh listened to this trio disputing as to what should be done with her.

'For she can't stay here alone,' said Fatima. 'And nothing will induce me to spend another night under this odious roof.'

'Why not send her to school?'

'Or to the Christians?'

'Perhaps there is some provision for her in the will?'

'Will! Don't tell me that such a monster could make a will, a valid will. Besides, he never made one.'

Fatima stamped her foot, and the diamond necklace sidled on her stormy bosom. Still disputing, they left the room.

That afternoon all the silk carpets and embroidered hangings; all the golden dishes and rock-crystal wine-coolers; together with the family jewels and Bluebeard's unique collection of the Persian erotic poets, were packed up and sent by camel to Selim's residence in Teheran. Thither travelled also Fatima, Ann, Selim, and Djamileh, together with a few selected slaves, Fatima in one litter with Selim riding at her side, doing his best to look stately but not altogether succeeding, since his mount was too big for him, Ann and Djamileh in the other. During the journey Ann said little, for she was engaged in ticking off entries in a large scroll. But once or twice she told Djamileh not to fidget, and to thank her stars that she had kind friends who would provide for her.

As it happened, Djamileh was perfectly well provided for. Bluebeard had made an exemplary and flawless will by which he left all his property to his only daughter and named his solicitor as her guardian until she should marry. No will can please everybody; and there was considerable heartburning when Badruddin removed Djamileh and her belongings from the care of Fatima, Ann, and Selim, persisting to the last filigree egg-cup in his polite thanks for their kind offices towards the heiress and her inheritance.

Badruddin was a bachelor, and grew remarkably fine jasmines. Every evening when he came home from his office he filled a green watering-pot and went to see how they had passed the day. In the latticed garden the jasmine bush awaited him like a dumb and exceptionally charming wife. Now he often found Djamileh

sitting beneath the bush, pale and silent, as though in response to being watered so carefully, the jasmine had born him a daughter.

It would have been well for Djamileh if she had owed her being to such an innocent parentage. But she was Bluebeard's daughter, and all the girl-babies of the neighbourhood cried in terror at her father's name. What was more, the poor girl could not look at herself in the mirror without being reminded of her disgrace. For she had inherited her father's colouring. Her hair was a deep butcher's blue, her eyebrows and eyelashes were blue also. Her complexion was clear and pale, and if some rare sally of laughter brought a glow to her cheek it was of the usual girlish pink, but the sinister parental pigmentation reasserted itself on her lips, which were deep purple, as though stained with eating mulberries, and the inside of her mouth and her tongue were dusky blue like a well-bred chow-dog's. For the rest she was like any other woman, and when she pricked her finger the blood ran scarlet.

Looks so much out of the common, if carried off with sufficient assurance, might be an asset to a modern miss. In Djamileh's time taste was more classical. Blue hair and purple lips, however come by, would have been a serious handicap for any young woman—how much more so, then, for her, in whom they were not only regrettable but scandalous. It was impossible for Bluebeard's badged daughter to be like other girls of her age, like romping Zulma and sentimental Amineh, Badruddin's great-nieces, who sometimes condescendingly shared her dancing lessons. The purple mouth seldom smiled, the blue hair, severely braided by day, was often at night wetted with her tears. She might, indeed, have dyed it. But filial devotion forbade. Whatever his faults, Bluebeard had been a good father.

Djamileh had a great deal of proper feeling, it grieved her to think of her father's crimes. But she had also a good deal of natural partiality, and disliked Fatima; and this led her to try to find excuses for his behaviour. No doubt it was wrong, very wrong, to murder so many wives; but Badruddin seemed to think that it was almost as wrong to have married them, at any rate to have married so many of them. Experience, he said, should have taught the deceased that female curiosity is insatiable; it was foolish to go on hoping to find a woman without curiosity. Speaking with gravity he conjured his ward to struggle, as far as in her lay, with this failing, so natural in her own sex, so displeasing to the other.

Djamileh fastened upon his words. To mark her reprobation of curiosity, the fault which had teased on her father to his ruin, she resolved never to be in the least curious herself. And for three weeks she did not ask a single question. At the end of the third week she fell into a violent fever, and Badruddin, who had been growing more and more disquieted by what appeared to him to be a protracted fit of sulks, sent for a doctress. The doctress was baffled by the fever, but did not admit it. What the patient needed, she said, was light but distracting conversation. Mentioning in the course of her chat that she had discovered from the eunuch that the packing-case in the lobby contained a new garden hose, the doctress had the pleasure of seeing Djamileh make an instant recovery from her fever. Congratulating herself on her skill and on her fee, the old dame went off, leaving Djamileh to realise that it was not enough to refrain from asking questions, some more radical method of combating curiosity must be found. And so when Badruddin, shortly after her recovery, asked her in a laughing way how she would like a husband, she replied seriously that she would prefer a public-school education.

This was not possible. But the indulgent solicitor did what he could to satisfy this odd whim, and Djamileh made such good use of her opportunities that by the time she was fifteen she had spoilt her hand-writing, forgotten how to speak French, lost all her former interest in botany, and asked only the most unspeculative questions. Badruddin was displeased. He sighed to think that the intellectual Bluebeard's daughter should have grown up so dull-witted, and spent more and more time in the company of his jasmies. Possibly, even, he consulted them, for though they were silent they could be expressive. In any case, after a month or so of enquiries, interviews, and drawing up treaties, he told Djamileh that, acting under her father's will, he had made arrangements for her marriage.

Djamileh was sufficiently startled to ask quite a number of questions, and Badruddin congratulated himself on the aptness of his prescription. His choice had fallen upon Prince Kayel Oumarah, a young man of good birth, good looks and pleasant character, but not very well-to-do. The prince's relations were prepared to overlook Djamileh's origin in consideration of her fortune, which was enormous, and Kayel, who was of a rather sentimental turn of mind, felt that it was an act of chivalry to marry a girl whom other young men might scorn for what was no

fault of hers, loved her already for being so much obliged to him, and wrote several ghazals expressing a preference for blue hair.

'What wouldn't I do, what wouldn't I do,
To get at that hair of heavenly blue?'

(the original Persian is, of course, more elegant) sang Kayel under her window. Djamilah thought this harping on her hair not in the best of taste, more especially since Kayel had a robust voice and the whole street might hear him. But it was flattering to have poems written about her (she herself had no turn for poetry), and when she peeped through the lattice she thought that he had a good figure and swayed to and fro with a great deal of feeling. Passion and a good figure can atone for much; and perhaps when they were man and wife he would leave off making personal remarks.

After a formal introduction, during which Djamilah offered Kayel symbolical sweetmeats and in her confusion ate most of them herself, the young couple were married. And shortly afterwards they left town for the Castle of Shady Transports, the late Bluebeard's country house.

Djamilah had not set eyes on Shady Transports since she was carried away from it in the same litter as Aunt Ann and the inventory. It had been in the charge of a caretaker ever since. But before the wedding Badruddin had spent a few days at the village inn, and under his superintendence the roof had been mended, the gardens trimmed up, all the floors very carefully scrubbed, and a considerable quantity of female attire burned in the stable-yard. There was no look of former tragedy about the place when Djamilah and Kayel arrived. The fountain plashed innocently in the forecourt, all the most appropriate flowers in the language of love were bedded out in the parterre, a troop of new slaves, very young and handsomely dressed, stood bowing on either side of the door, and seated on cushions in stiff attitudes of expectation Maya and Moghreb, Djamilah's most dear dolls, held out their jointed arms in welcome.

Tears came into her eyes at this token of Badruddin's understanding heart. She picked up her old friends and kissed first one and then the other, begging their pardon for the long years in which they had suffered neglect. She thought they must have pined, for certainly they weighed much less than of old. Then she recollected that she was grown up, and had a husband.

At the moment he was not to be seen. Still clasping Maya and

Moghreb she went in search of him, and found him in the armoury, standing lost in admiration before a display of swords, daggers and cutlasses. Djamilah remembered how, as a child, she had been held up to admire, and warned not to touch.

'That one comes from Turkestan,' she said. 'My father could cut off a man's head with it at a single blow.'

Kayel pulled the blade a little way from the sheath. It was speckled with rust, and the edge was blunted.

'We must have them cleaned up,' he said. 'It's a pity to let them get like this, for I've never seen a finer collection.'

'He had a splendid collection of poets, too,' said Djamilah. 'I was too young to read them then, of course, but now that I am married to a poet myself I shall read them all.'

'What a various-minded man!' exclaimed Kayel as he followed her to the library.

It is always a pleasure to explore a fine old rambling country house. Many people whose immediate thoughts would keep them tediously awake slide into a dream by fancying that such a house has—no exact matter how—come into their possession. In fancy they visit it for the first time, they wander from room to room, trying each bed in turn, pulling out the books, opening Indian boxes, meeting themselves in mirrors . . . All is new to them, and all is theirs.

For Kayel and Djamilah this charming delusion was a matter of fact. Djamilah indeed declared that she remembered Shady Transports from the days of her childhood, and was always sure that she knew what was round the next corner; but really her recollections were so fragmentary that except for the sentiment of the thing she might have been exploring her old home for the first time. As for Kayel, who had spent most of his life in furnished lodgings, the comfort and spaciousness of his wife's palace impressed him even more than he was prepared to admit. Exclaiming with delight, the young couple ransacked the house, or wandered arm in arm through the grounds, discovering fishponds, icehouses, classical grottos and rustic bridges. The gardeners heard their laughter among the blossoming thickets, or traced where they had sat by the quantity of cherry stones.

At last a day came when it seemed that Shady Transports had yielded up to them all its secrets. A sharp thunderstorm had broken up the fine weather, the rain was still falling, and Kayel and Djamilah sat in the western parlour playing chess like an old

married couple. The rain had cooled the air, indeed it was quite chilly; and Kayel, who was getting the worst of the game, complained of a draught that blew on his back and distracted him.

'There can't really be a draught, my falcon,' objected Djamileh, 'for draughts don't blow out of solid walls, and there is only a wall behind you.'

'There is a draught,' persisted he. 'I take your pawn. No, wait a moment, I'm not sure that I do. How can I possibly play chess in a whirlwind?'

'Change places,' said his wife, 'and I'll move the board.'

They did so and continued the game. It was now Djamileh's move; and as she sat gazing at the pieces Kayel fell to studying her intent and unobservant countenance. She was certainly quite pretty, very pretty even, in spite of her colouring. Marriage had improved her, thought he. A large portrait of Bluebeard hung on the wall behind her. Kayel's glance went from living daughter to painted sire, comparing the two physiognomies. Was there a likeness?—apart, of course, from the blue hair. Djamileh was said to be the image of her mother, certainly the rather fox-like mask before him, the narrow eyes and pointed chin, bore no resemblance to the prominent eyes and heavy jowl of the portrait. Yet there was something . . . the pouting lower-lip, perhaps, emphasised now by her considering expression. Kayel had another look at the portrait.

'Djamileh! There *is* a draught! I saw the hangings move.' He jumped up and pulled them aside. 'What did I say?' he enquired triumphantly.

'Oh! Another surprise! Oh, haven't I a lovely Jack-in-the-Box house?'

The silken hangings had concealed a massive stone archway, closed by a green baize door.

Kayel nipped his wife's ear affectionately. 'You who remember everything so perfectly—What's behind that door?'

'Rose-petal conserve,' she replied. 'I have just remembered how it used to be brought out from the cupboard when I was good.'

'I don't believe it. I don't believe there's a cupboard, I don't believe you were ever good.'

'Open it and see.'

Beyond the baize door a winding stair led into a small gallery or corridor, on one side of which were windows looking into the park, on the other, doors. It was filled with a green and moving light reflected from the wet foliage outside. They turned to each other

with rapture. A secret passage—five doors in a row, five new rooms waiting to be explored! With a dramatic gesture Kayel threw open the first door. A small dark closet was revealed, perfectly empty. A trifle dashed, they opened the next door. Another closet, small, dark and empty. The third door revealed a third closet, the exact replica of the first and second.

Djamileh began to laugh at her husband's crestfallen air.

'In my day,' she said, 'all these cupboards were full of rose-petal conserve. So now you see how good I was.'

Kayel opened the fourth door.

He was a solemn young man, but now he began to laugh also. Four empty closets, one after another, seemed to these amiable young people the height of humour. They laughed so loudly that they did not hear a low peal of thunder, the last word of the retreating storm. A dove who had her nest in the lime-tree outside the window was startled by their laughter or by the thunder; she flew away, looking pale and unreal against the slate-coloured sky. Her flight stirred the branches which shook off their raindrops, spattering them against the casement.

'Now for the fifth door,' said Kayel.

But the fifth door was locked.

'Djamileh, dear, run and ask the steward for the keys. But don't mention which door we want unfastened. Slaves talk so, they are always imagining mysteries.'

'I am rather tired of empty cupboards, darling. Shall we leave this one for the present? At any rate till after tea?—so much emptiness has made me very hungry, I really need my tea.'

'Djamileh, fetch the keys.'

Djamileh was an obedient wife, but she was also a prudent one. When she had got the bunch of keys she looked carefully over those which were unlabelled. These were many, and of all shapes and sizes; but at last she found the key she had been looking for and which she had dreaded to find. It was a small key, made of gold and finely arabesqued; and on it there was a small dark stain that might have been a bloodstain.

She slipped it off the ring and hid it in her dress.

Returning to the gallery she was rather unpleasantly struck by Kayel's expression. She could never have believed that his open countenance could wear such a look of cupidity or that his eyes could become so beady. Hearing her step he started violently, as though roused from profound absorption.

'There you are! What an age you have been—darling! Let's see now. Icehouse, Stillroom, Butler's Pantry, Winecellar, Family Vault . . . I wonder if this is it?'

He tried key after key, but none of them fitted. He tried them all over again, upside-down or widdershins. But still they did not fit. So then he took out his pocket-knife, and tried to pick the lock. This also was useless.

'Eblis take this female camel of a lock!' he exclaimed. And suddenly losing his temper he began to kick and batter at the door. As he did so there was a little click; and one of the panels of the door fell open upon a hinge, and disclosed a piece of parchment, framed and glazed, on which was an inscription in ancient Sanscrit characters.

'What the . . . Here, I can't make this out.'

Djamileh, who was better educated than her husband in such useless studies as calligraphy, examined the parchment, and read aloud, 'CURIOSITY KILLED THE CAT.'

Against her bosom she felt the little gold key sidle, and she had the unpleasant sensation which country language calls the grey goose walking over your grave.

'I think,' she said gently, 'I think, dear husband, we had better leave this door alone.'

Kayel scratched his head and looked at the door.

'Are you sure that's what it means? Perhaps you didn't read it right.'

'I am quite sure that is what it means.'

'But, Djamileh, I do want to open the door.'

'So do I, dear. But under the circumstances we had better not do anything of the sort. The doors in this house are sometimes rather queer. My poor father . . . my poor stepmothers . . .'

'I wonder,' mused Kayel, 'if we could train a cat to turn the lock and go in first.'

'Even if we could, which I doubt, I don't think that would be at all fair to the cat. No, Kayel, I am sure we should agree to leave this door alone.'

'It's not that I am in the least inquisitive,' said Kayel, 'for I am not. But as master of the house I really think it my duty to know what's inside this cupboard. It might be firearms, for instance, or poison, which might get into the wrong hands. One has a certain responsibility, hang it!'

'Yes, of course. But all the same I feel sure we should leave the door alone.'

'Besides, I have you to consider, Djamileh. As a husband, you must be my first consideration. Now you may not want to open the door just now; but suppose, later on, when you might be going to have a baby, you developed one of those strange yearnings that women, at such times, are subject to; and suppose it took the form of longing to know what was behind this door. It might be very bad for you, Djamileh, it might imperil your health, besides birth-marking the baby. No! It's too grave a risk. We had much better open the door immediately.'

And he began to worry the lock again with his penknife.

'Kayel, please don't. *Please don't.* I implore you, I have a feeling—'

'Nonsense. Women always have feelings.'

'—as though I were going to be sick. In fact, I am sure I am going to be sick.'

'Well, run off and be sick, then. No doubt it was the thunderstorm, and all those strawberries.'

'I can't run off, Kayel. I don't feel well enough to walk, you must carry me. Kayel!'—she laid her head insistently on his chest—'Kayel! I felt sick this morning, too.'

And she laid her limp weight against him so firmly that with a sigh he picked her up and carried her down the corridor.

Laid on the sofa she still kept a firm hold on his wrist, and groaned whenever he tried to detach himself. At last, making the best of a bad job, he resigned himself, and spent the rest of the day reading aloud to her from the erotic Persian poets. But he did not read with his usual fervour; the lyrics, as he rendered them, might as well have been genealogies. And Djamileh, listening with closed eyes, debated within herself why Kayel should be so cross. Was it just the locked closet? Was it, could it be, that he was displeased by the idea of a baby with Bluebeard blood? This second possibility was highly distressing to her, and she wished, more and more fervently, as she lay on the sofa keeping up a pretence of delicate health and disciplining her healthy appetite to a little bouillon and some plain sherbet, that she had hit upon a pretext with fewer consequences entailed.

It seemed to her that they were probably estranged for ever. So it was a great relief to be awakened in the middle of the night by Kayel's usual affable tones, even though the words were:

'By Jove, Djamileh, I believe I've got it! All we have to do

is to get a stonemason, and a ladder, and knock a hole in the wall. Then we can look in from outside. No possible harm in that.'

All the next day and the day after Kayel perambulated the west wing of Shady Transports with his stonemasons, directing them where to knock holes in the walls; for it had been explained to the slaves that he intended to bring the house up to date by throwing out a few bow-windows. But not one of these perspectives (the walls of Shady Transports were exceedingly massy) afforded a view into the locked closet. While these operations were going on, he insisted that Djamileh should remain at his side. It was essential, he said, that she should appear interested in the improvements, because of the slaves. All this while she was carrying about that key on her person, and debating whether she should throw it away, in case Kayel, by getting possession of it, should endanger his life, or whether she should keep it and use it herself the moment he was safely out of the way.

Jaded in nerves and body, at the close of the second day they had a violent quarrel. It purported to be about the best method of pruning acacias, but while they were hurrying from sarcasm to acrimony, from acrimony to abuse, from abuse to fisticuffs, they were perfectly aware that in truth they were quarrelling as to which of them should first get at that closet.

'Laterals! Laterals!' exclaimed Djamileh. 'You know no more of pruning than you know of dressmaking. That's right! Tear out my hair, do!'

'No, thank you.' Kayel folded his arms across his chest. 'I have no use for *blue hair*.'

Pierced by this taunt, Djamileh burst into tears. The soft-hearted Kayel felt that he had gone too far, and made several handsome apologies for the remark; but it seemed likely his apologies would be in vain, for Djamileh only came out of her tears to ride off on a high horse.

'No, Kayel,' she said, putting aside his hand, and speaking with exasperating nobility and gentleness. 'No, no, it is useless, do not let us deceive ourselves any longer. I do not blame you; your feeling is natural and one should never blame people for natural feelings.'

'Then why have you been blaming me all this time for a little natural curiosity?'

Djamileh swept on.

'And how could you possibly have felt anything but aversion for

one in whose veins so blatantly runs the blood of the Bluebeards, for one whose hair, whose lips, whose palate, stigmatise her as the child of an unfortunate monster? I do not blame you, Kayel. I blame myself, for fancying you could ever love me. But I will make you the only amends in my power. I will leave you.'

A light quickened in Kayel's eye. So he thought she would leave him at Shady Transports, did he?

'To-morrow we will go together to Badruddin. He arranged our marriage, he had better see about our divorce.'

Flushed with temper, glittering with tears, she threw herself into his willing arms. They were still in all the raptures of sentiment and first love, and in the even more enthralling raptures of sentiment and first grief when they set out for Teheran. Absorbed in gazing into each other's eyes and wiping away each other's tears with pink silk handkerchiefs, they did not notice that a drove of stampeding camels was approaching their palanquin; and it was with the greatest surprise and bewilderment that they found themselves tossed over a precipice.

When Djamileh recovered her senses she found herself lying in a narrow green pasture, beside a watercourse. Some fine broad-tailed sheep were cropping the herbage around, and an aged shepherdess was bathing her forehead and slapping her hands.

'How did I come here?' she enquired.

'I really cannot tell you,' answered the shepherdess. 'All I know is that about half an hour ago you, and a handsome young man, and a coachman, and a quantity of silk cushions and chicken sandwiches appeared, as it were from heaven, and fell amongst us and our sheep. Perhaps as you are feeling better you would like one of the sandwiches?'

'Where is that young man? He is not dead?'

'Not at all. A little bruised, but nothing worse. He recovered before you and feeling rather shaken he went off with the shepherds to have a drink at the inn. The coachman went with them.'

Djamileh ate another sandwich, brooding on Kayel's heartlessness.

'Listen,' she said, raising herself on one elbow. 'I have not time to tell you the whole of my history, which is long and complicated with unheard-of misfortunes. Suffice it to say that I am young, beautiful, wealthy, well-born and accomplished, and the child of doting and distinguished parents. At their death I fell into the hands of an unscrupulous solicitor who, entirely against my

will, married me to that young man you have seen. We had not been married for a day before he showed himself a monster of jealousy; and though my conduct has been unspotted as the snow he has continually belaboured me with threats and reproaches, and now has determined to shut me up, for ever, in a hermitage on the Caucasus mountains, inherited from a woman-hating uncle (the whole family are very queer). We were on our way thither when by the interposition of my good genius the palanquin overturned, and we arrived among your flocks as we did.'

'Indeed,' replied the aged shepherdess. 'He said nothing of all that. But I do not doubt it. Men are a cruel and fantastic race. I too have lived a life chequered with many strange adventures and unmerited misfortunes. I was born in India, the child of a virtuous Brahmin and of a mother who had, before my birth, graced the world with eleven daughters, each lovelier than the last. In the opinion of many well-qualified persons, I, the youngest of her children, was even fairer——'

'I can well believe it,' said Djamileh. 'But, venerable aunt, my misfortunes compel me to postpone the pleasure of hearing your story until a more suitable moment. It is, as you will see, essential that I should seize this chance of escaping from my tyrant. Here is a purse. I shall be everlastingly obliged if you will conduct me to the nearest livery-stables where I can hire a small chariot and swift horses.'

Though bruised and scratched, Djamileh was not much the worse for her sudden descent into the valley, and following the old shepherdess, who was as nimble as a goat, she scrambled up the precipice, and soon found herself in a hired chariot, driving at full speed towards the Castle of Shady Transports, clutching in her hot palm the key of the locked closet. Her impatience was indescribable, and as for her scruples and her good principles, they had vanished as though they had never been. Whether it was a slight concussion, or pique at hearing that Kayel had left her in order to go off and drink with vulgar shepherds I do not pretend to say. But in any case, Djamileh had now but one thought, and that was to gratify her curiosity as soon as possible.

Bundling up a pretext of having forgotten her jewellery, she hurried past the house steward and the slaves, refusing refreshment and not listening to a word they said. She ran to the west parlour, threw aside the embroidered hangings, opened the green baize door, flew up the winding stair and along the gallery.

But the door of the fifth closet had been burst open.

It gave upon a sumptuous but dusky vacancy, an underground saloon of great size, walled with mosaics and inadequately lit by seven vast rubies hanging from the ceiling. A flight of marble steps led down to this apartment; and at the foot of the steps lay Kayel, groaning piteously.

'Thank heaven you've come! I've been here for the last half-hour, shouting at the top of my voice, and not one of those accursed slaves has come near me.'

'O Kayel, are you badly hurt?'

'Hurt? I should think I've broken every bone in my body, and I know I've broken my collar-bone. I had to smash that door in, and it gave suddenly, and I pitched all the way down these steps. My second fall to-day. Oh!'

As she leaned over him the little golden key, forgotten and useless now, slid from her hand.

'My God, Djamileh! You've had that key all this time. And so *that* was why you came back?'

'Yes, Kayel. I came back to open the door. But you got here before me.'

And while that parry still held him she hastened to add:

'We have both behaved so shockingly that I don't think either of us had better reproach the other. So now let us see about your fracture.'

Not till the collar-bone was mending nicely—not till the coverlet which Djamileh had begun to knit as she sat by her husband's bedside, since knitting is always so soothing to invalids, was nearly finished—not till they had solved the last of the acrostics sent to them by a sympathising Badruddin, did they mention the affair of the closet.

'How could I have the heart to leave you—you, looking so pale, and so appealing?' said Kayel suddenly.

'And the lies I told about you, Kayel, the moment I came to . . . the things I said, the way I took away your character!'

'We must have been mad.'

'We were suffering from curiosity. That was all, but it was quite enough.'

'How terrible curiosity is, Djamileh! Fiercer than lust, more ruthless than avarice . . .'

'Insatiable as man-eating tigers . . .'

'Insistent as that itching powder one buys at low French fairs . . . O Djamileh, let us vow never to feel curiosity again!'

'I made that vow long ago. You have seen how much good it was.'

They meditated, gazing into each other's eyes.

'It seems to me, my husband, that we should be less inquisitive if we had more to do. I think we should give up all our money, live in a village, and work all day in the fields.'

'That only shows, my dearest, that you have always lived in a town. The people who work all day in the fields will sit up all night in the hopes of discovering if their neighbour's cat has littered brindled or tortoiseshell kittens.'

They continued to interrogate each other's eyes.

'A man through whose garden flowed a violent water-course,' said Djamileh, 'complained one day to the stream, "O Stream, you have washed away my hollyhocks, swept off my artichokes, undermined my banks, flooded my bowling-green, and drowned my youngest son, the garland of my grey head. I wish, O Stream, that you would have the kindness to flow elsewhere." "That cannot be," replied the stream, "since Allah has bidden me to flow where I do. But if you were to erect a mill on your property, perhaps you would admit that I have my uses." In other words, Kayel, it seems to me that since we cannot do away with our curiosity, we had best sublimate it, and take up the study of a science.'

'Let it be astronomy,' answered Kayel. 'Of all sciences, it is the one least likely to interfere in our private life.'

To this day, though Bluebeard's daughter is forgotten, the wife of Kayel the astronomer is held in remembrance. It was she whose sympathetic collaboration supported him through his researches into the Saturnian rings, it was she who worked out the mathematical calculations which enabled him to prove that the lost Pleiad would reappear in the year 1963. As time went on, and her grandchildren came clustering round the telescope, Djamileh's blue hair became silver; but to the day of her death her arched blue brows gave an appearance of alertness to her wrinkled countenance, and her teeth, glistening and perfect as in her girlhood, were shown off to the best advantage by the lining of her mouth, duskily blue as that of a well-bred chow-dog's.

A HIGHLAND MINISTER'S DIARY.

EDITED BY M. M. MACKAY.

MURDOCH MACDONALD, Minister of Durness in Sutherland, lived from 1727 to 1763 in Balnakeil Manse, that stark step-gabled house a few hundred yards from the northernmost shores of Britain, for the building of which the third Lord Reay had handed him £44 8s. 10½d. —the accounts are in the Register House at Edinburgh. To the north lies a little loch called Crosspyll¹; to east and west stretch the fields of a treeless glebe; to the South rise the moors strewn with the memorials of prehistoric man. And here, week by week, sometimes day by day, he wrote in his Diary.

I found it in Kintyre where it had arrived in the nineteenth century in the luggage of his great-grandson: a kind owner put it into my hands. History of the Reay country is hard to come by: I wanted to know what life was like for the Mackays of the eighteenth century; I wanted to probe into their private and personal reactions to the Forty-Five, as distinct from the controlled reactions of a clan disposed of by a fervently Hanoverian Chief. Alas! The Minister was a mystic: his diary at first sight seemed little more than a spiritual temperature chart. He could not buy a new nightgown without recording pious reactions:

Yesterday I got also a new Night-gown after wearing the former upwards, I think, of six years! How expensive are we to God! And what a mercy is it that we survive our Cloaths, and that we get new to succeed the old! Lord keep in mind of such favour in order to Gratitude, and of the primitive occasion of clothing in order to Humility.

Yet he had mentioned the nightgown: he had even hinted at a natural human vanity over the rare event. I persevered, and gradually, out of the fog of prayer, self-searching, and self-reproach, emerged a man—an à Kempis with the terrestrial difficulties of a Micawber. A man harassed, dunned, starved; struggling with temptation and sin, real or fancied; wasted by illness; exasperated to frenzy by a houseful of children who when they were not ill were turbulent. A bit

¹ Known to anglers for its land-locked sea-trout.

of a hypochondriac, yet courageous too. Touring his wild parish, sometimes taking those of his children who most needed tuition; travelling with them the jagged road to Scoury, skirting the terrifying precipices beside Loch Erribol, or putting out in an open boat into a stormy sea. And all this (with the gradual and perhaps merciful elimination of the children) year in year out until his death at sixty-seven.

He was a native of Durness, the son of parents so humble that when he was seventeen they planned to make him valet to one of the lesser Mackay lairds.

'... nor do I presently remember what may have hindered the Projects taking effect.'

Fortunately for all parties, perhaps, he went into the Ministry, taking the common way, via the teacher's desk, but bringing to it a piety uncommon even in an age of devout ministers, a shocking scrupulosity, and a Donne-like fancy. Everything contains a sign or portent. Sometimes the meaning is hard to read:

Yesternight I was in somewhat of a melting Frame at Family worship, and by a strange dark Providence my Daughter FLORY fell in the Fire, and burnt her Arm, just as I was remembering my young ones before the Lord. I wish I may understand the voice of this Step of my God's Dealing!

A decomposed whale furnishes a clearer lesson:

Last week was driven in upon this Shore a Whale of an uncommon Bigness were it intire; from the one Side of the Tail to the other at the Extremity is 15 foot, broader than this house within walls, by a Foot. As such a Creature is new to me, I cannot help wondering at it . . . Lord! who would doubt of Thy Goodness to rational Creatures when without Labour or Toyl, Thou maintainist such bulky Devourers, & keeps them in so fat a plight?

He read the reviews with avidity. In 1755 he asks his son Patrick, then in the South, to send him a Hebrew Grammar, an English Grammar, a 'Critical Analysis of all the Hebrew and Chaldaic words in the Bible,' a Quintilian ('that famous Standard of Taste and Eloquence')—and hints that he has seen in the March Magazine 'Extracts by way of a Swatch out of a new piece entitled THE CENTAUR NOT FABULOUS which greatly raises my curiosity.'

New books, however, are rare treasures, and whales are not cast up every day. The main picture is one of bitter hardship. The life of the Mackay of the eighteenth century must have been not unlike the Indian ryot's—'a query between a crop and a crop.' But in Sutherland

there was an added anxiety—the peats too might fail. Diseases were almost as deadly as those of India, and accepted almost as fatalistically.

The Small Pox are on their March towards us, making Execution as they travel through the Country ; there are three of my Children yet unvisited by that formidable Emissary of an offended God.

It was far, however, from being the most formidable. Famine once carries off twelve persons in a week. Murdoch, lying at Thurso very near death from a fever, gets news that two of his servants have died after a few days' fever. Another time he comes home to find three of his children at death's door from fevers. But worst of all was dysentery — 'the Flux.'

In 1741 was a particularly bad outbreak, on which the Diary is illuminating. It followed on a time of scarcity, and it reached its climax in that lean moment when the grain of last harvest was exhausted and the new had not yet come in—a time when, in the best of years, the Mackays were apt to be without bread for a fortnight :

5th Nov., 1740. Famine is threatened by the Severity of the Season, which occasion'd that few have got in in any good Condition the little Corn left them by the high and boisterous Storms. Nor is there Fire.

Saturday, 13th June, 1741, at Durness. People are at the Starving beyond what has been seen by the oldest alive as they tell ! A pestilential Flux, also, prevails, which dispatches many off in a few Days !

Mr. George Mackay, the young Minister of Eddrachilis, is among the first victims. On June 17 an Express arrives with news of his illness.

It is observable that tho' a Vomiter was sought for him both here, and at Tongue, there is none to be had. Thus the means are denied : but, the Sovereign Physician can do without them.

Thursday, 18th June. The Dearth, and Mortality still increasing. Lord ! God of Hosts, thy hand is up : hard to know where or when it may stop.

Fryday Morning, 19th June. Yesternight, I was struck with the Alarming News of the Death of Mr. George Mackay, a man ordain'd, married, and dead, in less than a month's time ! Lord ! what is man as such, in his best Estate, but meer Vanity ?

Fryday, 17th July. On Saturday, by eating such Fare as could only be had in Scarcity of Bread viz. Fish and milk, I contracted such pain as I heard the deceast Mr. George Mackay complain of, when, by the like Cause he contracted his Dead-ill, and I was some-

what apprehensive of the like fatal Consequence; but it pleased my God to disappt my Fears; On Tuesday there were Seven dead unburied in this poor Place. Besides that the raging Plague of bloody Flux was still spreading. Lord, what a Period of our Time is this!

Saturday, 1st August. Within the Compass of 2 months, there are upwards of 40 persons dead on this Side of this poor Parish! . . . it is little less than one in ten!

Sabbath evening, 9th Augt. I am this evening seiz'd wt the current mortal Disease of the bloody Flux.

Wednesday, 12th Augt. Yesterday I took a Vomiter, which is the first ordinary Prescription for the Disease I have just now; it wrought tolerably well, and I slept soundly after it. Yesterday I began to teach my Daughter Peggy a Lesson in the French Grammar, having a mind to try qt she can do at that modish Language; being persuaded by some of good Understanding that if she could make such Proficiency in that Language as she does at Musick, she might make Room for herself in the World by teaching.

Friday, 4th Sep. The Sick are fewer nor is the Disease so mortal.

In short, the harvest was in, and there was bread to eat as witness the following:

21st September. Sins . . . of a heinous nature breaking out among this People whose Overseer I am: particularly Theft, even when it has pleased the Lord to spare so many till they now see plenty of Bread, yet this does not restrain them.¹

With so much illness there is very little mention of doctors. Neither Tongue nor Durness seem to have had one, or even one within call. Young Mr. George Mackay dies, not for want of a doctor, but for want of a Vomiter. 'Vomiters' and 'Sweaters' were the universal remedies, with those other respectable traditions that even a mystic knows:

Fryday, 4th Janry. Morning. 1740. I had been ill with a sore throat which I was afraid might come to a Squinancy: but it pleas'd the Lord to remove it by the application of no other means but a warm Stocking. How easily may God remove the most threatening Calamity!

Well, Faith and a warm stocking were probably both safer and pleasanter than the remedies a doctor might have prescribed, seeing that medical degrees could still be bought at St. Andrews and Aberdeen. The people of the parish were apparently content to rely on their

¹ The writer of 'The State of the Highlands in 1750' declares that 'The McKys abhor Thieving'; Murdoch, unfortunately, does not support him.

Minister, and he gave them what help a mystic could who after all was the father of eleven.

Fryday, 3rd July, 1740. I was the instrument of saving the Life of a poor woman in Olrigg who was at the point of Death after Child-birth by the unskilfullness of her midwife.

Saturday, March 19, 1748. For these two days past I was mostly attending a sick Child belonging to the greatest in the Place who was seized with very violent Convulsive Fits which were like to make an End of her . . . A new instance and proof of that Evil, Original Sin! Lord! what Scorpions might old Sinners lay to their account when these poor Infants are lashd with such smarting Whips?

The 'greatest in the Place' refers to Donald Mackay, then Master of Reay, who lived at Durness. Murdoch never mentions the Reay family without bitterness and seldom without censure, one reason for which was certainly the difficulty he found in collecting his stipend of £42 16s. 8d. per annum. The dismal story runs through the Diary:

Thursday, 16th August, 1739. This season is like to prove hard upon me as to outward Circumstances: Creditors very craving, much Debt to be payd and very little to do it with; the demands of my family in the meantime swelling up: My wives Eyes continuing very ill, and my mother still decaying away.

Fryday, 3rd July, 1740. The Gentleman in whose hands my living is gave me neither victual nor money: this was hard.

24th June, 1748. With what Confusion must I see so many Creditors when I cannot do them Justice? And . . . the Gentleman in whose Hands my Living is, tho' the Debtor, must be waited on with Shyness & Ceremony by one in my Circumstances, otherwise he would starve me during the legal Course of Prosecution.

14th June, 1751. Yesterday I was told of a Horning to be soon executed against me . . . Let my Debts to God . . . be discharg'd, & then, I consent to go to Jayl.

He could not attend the Synod that year, between fear of the Horning and want of money, and he once records two years' interval between Sacraments, for want of means to procure 'The Elements'; otherwise these financial crises do not seem to have affected his ministerial work. Nor did they make a time-server of him. When the Hon. Colonel Mackay of Bighouse, then tutor of the Reay estates, elects to attend the Sacrament in another parish, Murdoch is grievously disappointed, because:

I, in Expectation of his Presence at our Sacrament, did level a good part of my public Discourses there, at his spiritual Disease

... and it is the opinion of not a few, that it was partly to shun my Bolts that the great Person in question absented.

He failed with most of his lairds. When Mr. Kenneth Sutherland was dying

nothing could prevail with him to think on death! . . . I spoke to him on that grave head, last asking whether he looked upon that Disease as his dead ill? His answer was, 'HONESTLY I DO NOT'!

And the Minister was nonplussed.

This was the last conference I had with this man.

But of his poorer parishioners he was able to write, evidently with truth:

Not only in many places of the Nation but even in the Bounds where I live, there is not such Submission to and approbation of ministerial Authority as I find here. It is my God that subdues my People under me.

He persuaded men very few of whom could read to attend weekday Dyets of Prayer and Fellowship Meetings which lasted half or even the whole of a day. Stopping with humble crofters, he keeps them up late into the night listening to 'Bayle's Seraphic Love,' and they appear to enjoy it. Fighting constantly his 'hellish temptations,' his 'frothyness on the one hand and on the other Sinfull Dulness' he overcomes also their Drowsyness.

When he stopped at home, it was to hold 'Private Dyets' of Prayer:

Tuesday, 20th August, 1745. 12-5 Family Devotion. Most part of the time spent in reading The Bishop of Sodor and Man's Book designed principally for the Conversion of the Indians, but very usefull for many profess'd Christians.

Less so, apparently for the little Macdonalds, whose reaction to five hours' devotion provokes the bitter cry that they are so devoted to Folly that I know not what to do with them—And what method to follow I am quite ignorant of.

The poor man tended to fall back upon his wife alone for his domestic prayer meetings:

My wife having as it were eloped from her throng, spent some hours with me . . . In the intervalls of prayer, I read in her hearing two sermons of Mr. Love's treatise on 'Hell's Terrors.' . . .

Outside these Dyets of Prayer the Diary does not say much of Mrs. Macdonald. She was a Calder from Fife, and knew no 'Irish,' which seems to indicate that even in the first half of the eighteenth century, and in the remote North-West, a good many Highlanders spoke English.

Entries concerning her are apt to run on certain lines :

My wife is now far gone in another pregnancy, but I cheerfully commit vessel and cargo to Thy hands as the best of Masters and Pilots.

She moves uncomplainingly through the Diary, a patient shadow, providing for the comfort of her husband, his parents, his widowed sister, her own children (eleven in all) and the boarders constantly thrust upon the Manse by the Mackay 'Grandeess,' often at times when the Minister is trying to borrow money for food :

May, 1745. We are in an endless hurry from morning to night with the Education of and Provision for a numerous Family of Children, Servants and other Domesticks who . . . came to add to our Throng in the most unseasonable time for us as we think that could be.

6th June, 1752. Yesterday was Bighouse's Daughter taken out of this House as Boarder, & that by her Mother's Caprice, influenced, it seems, by the malicious Tattles of some. . . .

7th September, 1755. At Eriboll . . . in conference with a Gentleman whose daughter has now been for a long Time in my house . . . I have not been well used by her Parents whose Credulity made them, of late, believe some false reports, as if she was not well us'd in this house.

The 'Tattles' were sometimes, perhaps, justifiable. It was not altogether a peaceful circle that the little Domesticks joined : Murdock's children had little of the spirit of that son of another diarist, the Rev. Thomas Boston, who at seven years old was pensive because he found himself without an interest in Christ. They were noisy normal little wretches, who not only refused to become mystics themselves but constantly goaded a mystic parent to unseemly and disturbing passion.

I lashed some of them this Day, [*he writes, and then next day remarks sadly :*] As the Sea after a Storm hobbles a while even of the calm weather, so a fit of Passion easily comes on, but is not so soon remov'd by the best Endeavours to bring oneself back to peace and Quiet. This to my Shame and Sorrow is the Case with me after the Sinfull Broil of Yesterday.

On January 15, 1745, he finds it impossible to apply himself to his preparation for the Sabbath, being too much jumbled and interrupted by the untowardness of my little daughter Flory who could write prettily some months ago, and unlearned most of her skill in that way in this Intervall.

Joseph, the youngest son, was perhaps the only child to give his father unalloyed satisfaction. True, the first mention of him is not encouraging :

Monday-Evening, 26th Feby., 1739. Lord thy Grace is free, and therefore I put in for as much of it as may ballance the additional weight of Sin that is come to my House, in the person of this Infant.

But when the Smallpox are on their March Murdoch confesses :

In case there should be a teinding, and that God might share with me, I am too ready to make a Choice . . . Particularly am I afraid of poor Josie, the Child that gave me least disturbance & most Satisfaction of them all . . . none of my Children in his age was so piously disposed.

He was also the most musical of a musical family. In 1755 his future is earnestly considered, and it is curious to find the Army and Navy looked upon as professions to be adopted 'faute de mieux' by the son of a poor Highland minister who himself had been so near becoming a domestic servant.

No time should be lost in scheming out some way of living for Joseph in the Army or Navy, or failing of those, in the musical way, as we can't set him up in a trading Business for want of a Stock, nor can we in our present Circumstances propose to get him made an Apprentice to a Surgeon or Writer.

In the event Joseph went out to Madras, and died of fever within the year, but not before he had sent home his 'Book of Highland Airs' which, though rare, is to be found in the great Edinburgh libraries.

Patrick, who published the Airs in 1784, and preserved the Diary, was the eldest son—the child who had made his father so impatient when at twenty-two he failed to secure a kirk.

Having begun you at four, and brought you to the Latin at six could my Expectation be hyperbolic, that in a course of 18 years Study, you might have come from the A. B. C. to the Pulpit ?

He became Minister of Kilmore in Argyle.

The daughters went early to situations—with their gift for music and such French as their father had taught them they were in great request to teach the daughters of the northern 'Grandeess.' By 1750 Peggy, aged seventeen, has for some time been teaching the children of Colonel Hugh Mackay of Bighouse. Thence she is sent for to teach the children of Lady Forse in Caithness, and when she is courted and married out of hand on the journey, nothing will satisfy Lady

Forse but another Macdonald. So Mally the eldest is sent, and although her progress in French and music has been wretchedly slow, and she shows swatches of disagreeable temper, Mally only leaves the place years later for one of still greater figure. And meanwhile Lady Reay was successfully disputing with the Colonel for the services of Flora, aged fourteen, who five years earlier had jumbled her father by forgetting how to write. The era of the half-educated governess was in full swing.

With the departure of the girls a comparative peace descended upon the Manse. If it had come a few years earlier it is possible that the Diary might have been less lamentably reserved over the Forty-five, though discretion was no doubt very necessary in one who was Minister to a Whiggish clan while his own clan made up two-fifths of the Prince's army. The Prince set up his standard on August 19, but the first reference to him is :

Sabbath, 28th October.¹ No publick news this day, tho in it the Post returned from Tongue. There is it seems an Embargo laid on all Intelligence since our Enemies have got so much Power into their Hands. Only a talk that the Pretender's Second Son is landed in England, with a foreign Force in his Favours.²

Tuesday, October 29th. There is an order come from the Superior of the Country ³ for a universal Gathering of all that are able to carry Arms.

Letters from Lord Reay preserved in 'Culloden Papers' speak of difficulty in getting the men in. In scattered references Murdoch gives reasons for this : the clan had been upon the Starving Point and at the Pinch all the year. There had been an unprecedented loss of cattle and crops ; the peats were still, in October, 'uncarried'—lying where they were cut for want of weather to dry them. But these things apart, were the men willing? Murdoch, unctuously loyal, does not give a hint. Lord Reay, that astute old man, made use of the Minister's influence with his people :

Sabbath Evg, 3rd Nov. On the other side of my Parish by virtue of an order from the Superior of the Land who wanted that I should . . . preach to the People who were there on their way to Tongue . . . upon the National Expedition.

In December, he took the tremendous step of changing his 'ordinary' :

¹ It should be 27th.

² This is a curious anticipation of the rumour which only appeared in the 'General Evening Post' on May 3, '46.

³ The third Lord Reay.

In this drumly period . . . I have thought proper to change my subject of preaching and endeavour to model a little on a text which has often been sweet to me viz Ps 112.7 *We shall not be afraid of evil tidings.*¹

23rd Feb., 1746. The withering state of my soul keeps me from recording anything about the publick which continues embroiled in the Unnatural Rebellion which still rages in the Bowells of our Nation.

It is easier to forgive the egotism of this because up till then he had probably had very little to tell. The news of the battle of Falkirk took a month to reach him. But on February 20 the Prince took Inverness, and the garrison, flying through Sutherland to Skye, brought the enemy in pursuit behind them :

We are all in a commotion by the threatened Invasion of these men, who in our neighbouring Country are making Havack . . . The poor people here are all like Reeds shaken with the wind, hiding all their portable Effects, and at a loss what to do with themselves.

Agitation increased over the episode of the ' Hazard,' that adventurous sloop which, stolen by the Rebels from Montrose harbour in November, '45, had done great service running 'snow' from France, when she was captured by 'H.M.S. Sheerness' with £13,000 for the Prince on board.

Wednesday night, 26th March. Yesternight we heard in the Evening throng canonading to Eastward . . . and this afternoon we are told it was an Engagement between a French ship and one of our men of War, . . . the French vessel was driven ashore below Melness, and out of her landed some hundreds of men who were met by our Flying Company on the Frontiers of this Parish and some of them killed and the rest taken prisoners and delivered to the Man of War.

Thursday night, 27th March. Nothing particular, by the laziness or necessary absence of our Runners.

Sabbath Evening, 30th March. The Ship from France . . . in which were 150 or 160 men with their Treasure . . . of £13,000 Ster, is like to prove a Bone of Contention between some of our Stranger Dons, in a sort of Exile with us at present, and our own Great Folks, who dispute the Prize with them.

The Stranger Dons were, of course, those officers and gentlemen from Inverness who had remained about Tongue when Lord Loudon

¹ It was the seventh of December—the Prince had turned back from Derby the day before, but Murdock did not know that.

and the main body went on to Skye. Accounts of the disposal of the money have been many, and the question is still debatable. One box of £1,000 was not recovered, and fishermen who frequent those parts know the tradition that it was dropped by the French into little Loch Haakon, and that still sometimes a cow, watering in the loch, will come back with a Louis d'or caught in her hoof. Murdoch, that unromantic man, attributes its disappearance to Major Forbes of Ribigill, Lord Reay's factor, whose family grew from that day prosperous and insolent.

The interval between the capture of the 'Hazard' and the battle of Culloden on April 16 he spent in travelling about his parish to allay the panic, remarking a little righteously :

How sorry I am to find . . . so many Professors of Religion who . . . yet do nothing in this time of common danger but Sigh, Sob, and Stare at one another within Doors.

News of Culloden reaches him on the actual day of battle.

We are told that our Friends have greatly got the better of our Enemies [*Despite all those poor Macdonalds, they are always 'our Enemies'*] . . . Tis thought that the remaining part of that Wretched Set of men can't long Survive.

The Diary drops back into the rut ; the Minister is occupied with other rebellions :

O, when shall I return in Triumph, with the Heads of my Gigantick Lusts in my hands ?

In 1763, the year of his death, creditors are still very craving, but he is

not a little refreshed with heavenly Dainties, very dextrously handled (may I not say dressed) by . . . Edward Pearse in that ravishing piece of his entitled the '*Best Match*' . . . notwithstanding that my wife had the clog of a tender sickly body which was the case with myself too. But what a digesting Influence upon such ailments have religious Exercises !

His clog was perhaps worse than he knew :

Sabbath day at noon, 26th June, 1763. On account of the Stitch which still keeps its place I was bled again on Friday and yesternight I took a Vomit, which wrought tolerably, & with less pain than I was fearing.

And now he knows that he is likely to die :

If it be thy will . . . that my warfare against unbelief should end only with my Life, thy will be ever done !

It is the last entry.

JOYS IN REMEMBRANCE.

BY THURSTAN TOPHAM

WHEREIN lies the charm of fishing? It is difficult to say directly and definitely. But all true brothers of the angle will agree with the statement that fishing is not merely catching fish.

Old Sir Henry Wotton, one-time president of Eton, wrote of fishing to his friend Izaak Walton that 'after tedious study, it was a rest to his mind, a chearer of his spirits, a diverter of sadness, a calmer of unquiet thoughts, a moderator of passions, a procurer of contentedness, and begat habits of peace and patience.'

I think those words, written nearly three centuries ago, still hold good. But yet they do not explain why fishing made the old gentleman feel so happy.

Perhaps the curious sense of detachment from the workaday world that anglers feel while fishing is the chief charm. A fisherman lays aside for the time being all financial, domestic and other worries in a way that seems impossible with any other form of recreation. And there comes to him a feeling of escape, of freedom, tinged with the anticipation of imminent adventure. He attains also a sense of complete self-reliance like that of a soldier on active service. Anything may happen any moment, he feels, and it is all going to be very interesting and exciting. And it is 'up' to him to meet emergencies, to keep his eyes open, to learn from nature's book, and lastly to outwit the fish. Lastly, because the actual taking of a fish corresponds to the goal scored in a game. The chief joy lies in the game itself, and the happenings during the game.

It is astonishing what odd and interesting things do happen when one goes fishing, and with what vivid delight one recalls them again. There may indeed be some grounds for the time-worn legend that fishermen are prone to stretch both the truth and the length of their fish occasionally; but the psalmist did not particularise when he stated mournfully that 'all men are liars,' and on the whole I think a fisherman's word is as reliable as the next man's.

One of the oddest occurrences that I know of happened to a

friend of mine on a Canadian lake noted for its black bass. He had purchased, in a Montreal fishing-tackle shop, a highly recommended artificial mouse made of deer hair, tail and all; an excellent imitation of the real beastie. He was fishing from a canoe, and the time was late evening, after sunset and before dark. He had just put this mouse arrangement on, and made a cast with it. His canoe lay almost hidden in the shadow of a big boulder. The mouse hit the water, floated there, and then he began to reel it in gently. It moved slowly towards him, making an inviting little ripple on the quiet water.

Suddenly a grey shadow swept like a ghost over his head and made directly for the mock mouse. There was a slight splash, a jerk of the line, and the mouse had gone, while the reel began to click merrily.

What had happened was that a huge owl had grabbed the lure in his claws, mistaking it for the genuine thing, a swimming live wood-mouse. My friend was so flabbergasted that he gave a sudden wild 'strike' with his rod which broke the top joint and also his connection with the owl. However, the bird did not drop the mouse but disappeared with it into the night. One wonders what he said about it later, in owly language.

I once had a curious evening experience on a lake in the same vicinity. I was fishing from a flat-bottomed *choupe* which I had anchored at the mouth of a large brook entering the lake. As night drew near I became the centre of interest for a number of small bats (*Nycticejus*). They are very common in the woods of Quebec and do a good work as consumers of the over-abundant mosquito and other insects. Every so often one or two of these bats would swoop in flight close by my head. Trout were rising and I was casting continually. One of my casts felt very peculiar. There was a queer pull on the line and then a little splash. Something came in that was certainly not a trout, as it fluttered strangely on the top of the water. I found I had driven my fly through the wing of a bat. Unfortunately I was obliged to kill the ugly little brute as it was evidently beside itself with fear and rage and bared needle-like teeth at my fingers when I tried to disengage it. Since then I have frequently struck bats with my rod-tip, but never 'hooked' another.

Another time I was on a lake near the Saguenay River, with a guide and a lady guest from the hotel at which I was staying, when a strange thing happened. We had motored to the lake

from the hotel and left the car in the bush. As we paddled our canoe across the lake, a loon, or Great Northern Diver—that curious bird whose wild unearthly cry so startles those who hear it for the first time—kept up an almost continuous calling, broken only when it dived. Then it would reappear in its usual mysterious way a hundred yards or more from its vanishing-point and again burst into clamour.

The guide told us it was a mother bird with a single young one, and that on the previous day he had come up to the lake with some tourists who had stupidly pursued its precious offspring, which was too young to fly; and that they had captured it when the poor little thing became too exhausted to dive any more. They had eventually released it, but the old bird had been frantic with anxiety. She now evidently feared another 'kidnapping,' although we could see nothing of the baby loon. We kept paddling on our course, and the loon by degrees got farther from us and at last ceased to cry. We had just entered a 'narrows' between two larger bodies of the lake. I was paddling at the stern, the guide at the bow; the lady was seated amidships. Suddenly she gave a start and cried 'Look! Look!' I twisted my head in the direction she was pointing, and here was the big mother loon in the air, zooming straight for my head, or so it looked, and only about twenty yards away. I snatched the paddle from the water and brandished it. The bird, which to my startled gaze looked about the size of a small airplane, did not turn until almost on us; then it lost courage and came swerving down on the water with a great splash that sprinkled the three of us liberally. It then uttered its wild cry once more before finally diving and disappearing from view. We neither saw nor heard it again. It probably rose close inshore where its little one was lying doggo. But I've often wondered what would have happened had the lady not spotted it when she did. A full-grown loon is a heavily built, stocky bird, nearly three feet long, with a strong pointed bill. I have never seen or heard of another case of a loon 'going for' anyone.

In the Province of Quebec, where I have lived for some years, there are many small wild animals as well as deer, moose and bear, which one occasionally meets, but most of them are shy and adept at keeping out of sight. Squirrels and chipmunks are the exceptions, especially the friendly and cheeky little chipmunks. These pretty little striped squirrels have a most inquisitive nature. Often while fishing I have heard the tiny chatter of

a hidden chipmunk coming at intervals from some leafy shelter. Then, abruptly, out he has dashed and scampered, quick as a flash, to sit—the picture of frozen motion—on a dead log a yard or so from my elbow; but ready to vanish in a twinkling at my first movement. And then, finding by frequent visits of inspection that I am apparently harmless, he has grown bolder. Once I sat in the middle of a log bridge while a pair of chipmunks played a game of tag backwards and forwards across the bridge. The idea of the game seemed to consist in seeing which could run nearest to me without being tagged. Twice they ran over the toe of my fishing-boots. They were just like naughty little boys who annoy motorists by deliberately getting in the way.

I must confess I have never met a bear in the woods, though on more than one occasion I have been aware of their proximity. But speaking of bears reminds me of a visit I made to a little fishing inn at La Barrière (about a hundred miles from Montreal), where they had a semi-tame bear (accent on the semi, please), tethered by a chain to a stout post in front of the house. There was also a sort of big dog kennel for shelter. The bear, who had been christened Marguerite, had a passion for sweets and it was quite safe, so I was assured, to walk up to her as long as one waved a stick of chocolate cream in front of her nose. Being of a credulous nature, I swallowed this story and tried the experiment; egged on by my fishing companion who promised to back me up with more supplies of candy. The French-Canadian hotel proprietor (and owner of the animal) stood by. Marguerite came eagerly out of the kennel on all fours as I walked, with some trepidation, towards her. 'Hol' dat candy high, high, m'sieu!' instructed the innkeeper. I did so, well away from me, over Marguerite's nose. She reared, making greedy uncouth whining noises as she pointed her nose upwards. My friend, who was anxious to get a photograph of the affair, urged me to keep the candy out of her reach for a few seconds while he snapped us, and Marguerite, swaying awkwardly, stretched out a paw and steadied herself by laying it on my arm. She had a very good set of claws. I let her have the candy without delay, and spent the next few minutes painting my arm with iodine and telling my friend a few things.

That was a memorable trip for various reasons. The innkeeper held a kind of family reunion one night. Fords and farm-buggies kept arriving and bringing more cousins and 'in-laws' of both sexes and all ages, until the big common room in the inn was filled

to overflowing. I had been very tired that day and had gone early to bed. Just before I fell asleep my friend arrived in my bedroom and said, 'Top, you're missing something. Get up and come downstairs!' Grumbling a bit, I did. When I arrived a lumberjack was playing jigs on a fiddle, keeping time with a tapping of his heavily booted foot, and the whole company was dancing old French-Canadian square dances. In the intervals, various 'turns' were put on by singers, all the company joining in the chorus. Old songs like 'Allouette,' 'En roulant ma boule' and 'Malbrough s'en va-t-en guerre' were sung most lustily. Two little girls did a modern tap dance. The inevitable 'whisky blanc,' which is the favourite tippie of the *habitant* and a most horrible-tasting drink to all others, flowed freely—together with a curious mixture known as *caribou*, containing native red wine. The climax came when the innkeeper had the bright idea of bringing in Marguerite, the bear, to join the company. He seemed to be able to handle her by her chain without much trouble, and she was enthroned on a heavy table where she consumed enormous quantities of candy. All the guests fed her until she must have been on the point of bursting. A number of dogs belonging to guests, that had been in the room, all retired into corners and kept growling at intervals. At this point I again went to bed. During the night I was awakened several times by the noise of departing guests, but in the morning all was quiet once more in the inn.

On that same trip my friend took the largest red trout I have yet seen caught on fly—just over four pounds.

Early in May I went on an expedition to a certain lake called Kanichee. The weather turned cold and stormy and the rain began to fall in torrents. We had a local guide with us, who showed us an old lumberman's cabin in the bush, built of logs. It had no door or windows, but at least we felt it was shelter and also we could possibly build a fire there. As we entered, a large porcupine decided to leave, and dashed through our legs, startling us considerably. Inside were a couple of bunks built ship-fashion, one over the other, at the end of the shack. My friend was tired and decided to lie down on the upper one, which had an old straw mattress on it. As he climbed in, a pair of squirrels bolted out over his shoulders, causing him to use some unusual language. We wondered what further live-stock would appear, but there were no more surprises for the time being. But we were not yet finished with that wretched cabin. We found a little later, to our

horror, that it was infested with bed-bugs, a heritage of the lumber-jacks; and we left it, never to return. That was one of our bad days, as our canoe foundered in the storm on the way home, in four feet of water. Still, we have laughed over that day many times since, as one now laughs at some things that happened to one during war time.

And the mention of war days reminds me of a funny fishing experience in France. I was a gunner in a siege battery. Being a confirmed fisherman from earliest youth, I used to carry a few 'hooks to gut' in my cigarette-case, ready in the event of my having a possible chance to use them. I must here confess I had already poached trout from the Lambourne when we were encamped in Berkshire, a welcome addition to ordinary ration. In June, '16, on the Somme, the battery was just outside a little place called Meaulte. The river Ancre ran close to the village, and poking around one evening I found an A.S.C. corporal fishing there, with extemporised tackle, by a bridge. I enquired if he'd got anything. He said, 'No, not to-night, but two the night before.' I then asked what kind, and he replied that they were trout. He further volunteered the information that he was using cheese for bait! I had never heard of trout taking cheese but politely made no comment, and anyway, if trout, they were French trout and it was war-time. But on the following evening I was on the river with my sole remaining hook—the rest were somehow 'gone west'—a length of thin string, a willow wand and a piece of ration cheese. I picked a likely looking spot for my operations and lowered my bait into a dark pool below the roots of a tree. For about ten minutes nothing happened, then there came a tug at the line and I struck. Something fairly heavy was on, by the feel, and my willow bent over. There was not much chance to 'play' him and just at that moment a salvo of shells landed in the field about seventy-five yards away. I decided immediately to take a chance and swing the fish out. Alas, my gut broke and to this day I know not whether or not French trout are cheese devourers, for by the time I had sent to Blighty for more hooks and received them, the first of July had arrived, the Somme battle was on, and the battery had moved into Sausage Valley, miles away. I was bitterly disappointed, as I would have liked to have got some of those fish.

It is one of the greatest joys of a fisherman's life to produce a good fish from water where 'there are no fish,' according to local

reports, which are frequently misleading. One feels triumphant indeed. I have discovered such a river not too far from my home in Montreal, where by applying locally unusual methods, the dry fly in fact, I have secured good results. But I consider my greatest triumph, which I still recall in detail though it happened in my schoolboy fishing days, was the capture of an enormous pike. I say enormous, because to a small boy's eyes it was so, and it has always remained so in my mind. During the summer holidays I had been invited by a new school-friend whose home was within biking distance of mine, to spend the day with him and to bring my fishing-rod. The large pond to which he introduced me was not very promising-looking water, but, as he said, it held plenty of perch, of which we took about a dozen during the course of an hour or so. Then they refused to bite, and airing my boasted knowledge of fish, I gave it as my sage opinion that they had been scared off by the presence of a pike.

My friend said there were no pike there, but I having recently been presented with a gaudy red-and-silver Colorado spoon by a benevolent fisherman uncle, was anxious to show it off. I tied on the spoon, cast as far as I could, and then began to reel it in again. Suddenly there was a huge swirl in the neighbourhood of the spoon and a terrific weight on the line. It *was* a pike! Somehow, more by luck than by good management, it stayed on until I had got it tired out and lying on its side in shallow water. We had no landing net and I suggested to my companion that he strip off boots and socks and go in to lift the pike out. We were both about the same age, ten or twelve. My suggestion was firmly refused, as the pike looked to both of us a particularly large and vicious creature. In the end I allowed my friend to hold the rod while I went in, with boots on; and getting my two hands under the fish I heaved it on the bank, where we both fell on it and eventually overcame its struggles, getting our hands well bitten in the process. I don't remember what it weighed, or even if it ever was weighed, but I do recall the proud fact that when suspended by a string from the handle-bars of my bicycle, its tail dragged on the dusty road; also the remark of a rustic onlooker who said, 'it was biggest fush what he'd ever seed coom out o' 't water!' And naturally my reputation as a fisherman was made when we returned to school the next term. I have caught bigger and better fish since those days, but none with more pleasure in recollection.

There is always joy in the open air, in the scents of spruce and

balsam, in the clean wind and the sky. And great storms are recalled to one's mind. A friend and myself were once caught in the forest in one of the worst storms I ever remember. It was a day of great heat and towards noon one sensed a menace in the air. It is distinctly unpleasant to find oneself in these circumstances with a car miles away from the highroad, because there is a very real danger in driving through the Quebec narrow forest roads during a heavy gale. The trees are close on either hand, many are rotten and ready to fall, and one or two trees across the road may keep one in the bush for hours—to say nothing of the possibility of a tree smashing down on the car. So, having had a little experience of storms, we decided to make for the highway, about ten miles away. The storm now came up rapidly with grumbings of thunder over the hills. We made up our minds it was going to be a real one and thought it would be a good idea to drive in to the little country town of Lachute, have a meal at the inn while the storm was on, and then possibly return to our fishing later, depending on the state of the roads.

We had driven several miles and were almost out of the bush when the storm came on with a rush. Across a clearing in the forest we saw the sky quickly turn to a dirty yellow brown, streaked across with darker patches that looked like falling mud. Then we heard the wind coming, as the trees on the far edge of the clearing bent and thrashed in the air. There was no place to park the car as the road was still among heavy trees. Down came a tree, behind us luckily; lightning flashed in dazzling and continuous ribbons and a bombardment of hailstones the size of large marbles threatened to beat in the roof of the car. It was almost as dark as night, so I switched on the headlights and crawled gingerly along until we found a high bank, under which I snuggled the car as close as possible. We discussed in gloomy tones the chances of a tree coming down on us, hoping the bank would save us in that event. Eventually my friend came to the sound conclusion that there was nothing to be done except find the whisky and have a good stiff one, which we did. The noise was deafening and bewildering; the drumming roar of the hail on the roof, the wind and the thunder, combined to make a most awe-inspiring din. Another tree came down ahead of us and we took another drink. It didn't last long—in about ten minutes we could again see the road ahead and I started the car through a regular Niagara of rain. We navigated through the branches of several trees that,

luckily for us, had fallen diagonally on the road, but soon the car began to cough and splutter. Water had crept in somewhere. We managed to keep going—happily we were on a down slope, but just before we got to Lachute the engine conked out for good right in the middle of a narrow latticed steel bridge. The lightning still stayed round us and my friend's remarks as to the place I'd picked to get stuck in were much to the point. We had to get towed in later, and yet we now look back with pleasure on that storm. It was something to remember.

Montreal.

PUSSY CAT.

Pussy cat, Pussy, the sun has gone down;
Why do you sit in your sooty-black gown
Staring with saturnine, amber eyes
Up at the moon in the far-off skies?
Why won't you come to the warm, kitchen mat—
Do you like solitude best, you strange cat?
You look such a lonely, small shape on the wall,
Your shadow as long as a steep waterfall;
Why should the moon, with his silvery path,
Keep you away from your place on the hearth?
Is he your sweetheart that thus you will linger
Just for the touch of his long, narrow finger?

ELIZABETH TEMPLE WELLS.

THE MOUSE.

BY MISCHA FEODROFF.

OLD KOLYA sat on the bed in his prison cell and scratched his head. He scratched it slowly and methodically, not because he was perplexed in any way but simply because he had nothing else to do. He was just starting his six-months' sentence so that there was no need to hurry about anything. To scratch his head, with its long matted hair, would take at least two whole days if it was to be done properly. The straggly peasant beard would certainly occupy another two or three days, and so on. Six months would be just time enough to do the whole job.

This was Old Kolya's second day in prison and so far he was more than satisfied. He had never been in a gaol before this, but if all Russian gaols were like this one he promised himself to come more often. A quiet cell to himself, a comfortable bed with a nice thick blanket that smelled of carbolic soap, and plenty of good food—with *blinyi* on Sundays. There is nothing a Russian peasant likes more than a couple of hot, fat pancakes that keep your inside warm for hours after you've eaten them. And the beauty of it all was that the Government expected him to do very little work in return for all this comfort.

Work was the great bugbear of Old Kolya's life. It was a dark spectre which was always hovering over his head and mumbling in a gloomy voice. Kolya was lazy and he hated work—why couldn't people understand that and leave him alone to enjoy the warm sunshine in the summer and the steaming hot atmosphere of his *isba* in the long winter nights? The good God never expected *all* His children to for ever rush about busily. Oh yes, Kolya was very lazy—in fact, he was born two whole weeks later than he was expected, which caused his mother a great deal of unpleasantness and made Marka, the midwife, curse with annoyance. They said in Kolya's native village of Bergomsk that the delay was undoubtedly the child's own fault because he was too lazy to start the task of living.

It was laziness, in a way, which had brought Kolya to prison. In Bergomsk he had his own little log cabin which he had inherited

from his father, and he had a small plot of ground all his own. There had been one cow, too, but she had died because Kolya was too lazy to milk her regularly or else he forgot to bring her fodder: between a too-full udder and an empty belly the poor old cow had found life quite unbearable. However, even without a cow Kolya should have been a comparatively fortunate peasant. With a little steady work he might have extended his possessions and in time become a rich and powerful *kulak*. But he was lazy and so was quite content to live a higgledy-piggledy life, growing just enough wheat to last him through the year.

One day, after a whole winter of cogitation, Kolya had decided that he deserved a holiday. He had done nothing all winter and expected to do very little during the summer, but nevertheless he felt the need of a change. A holiday meant taking a trip to the neighbouring town of Samara and spending a few days living riotously until all one's money was gone. But there was the difficulty: Kolya had no money. So instead of earning some honestly he became a thief. When he discovered by chance where the rich Andrey Petrovitch kept his woollen socks filled with fat golden rubles, it was natural that Kolya should take one of the socks; not the largest or heaviest by any means—simply enough for a good healthy holiday. A few gold pieces went a long way in Samara: one could get drunk on *kvass* one day and on *vodka* the next, and then perhaps a little time spent in the company of a wonderfully perfumed lady who did not mind sleeping with a rough peasant in return for a gold coin.

The *uradnik* caught Old Kolya as he was preparing to leave the village. One, two, three—and they had found the gold coins tucked in the thick peasant blouse. 'Nicholas Ivanovitch Glasoff, I arrest you in the name of the Tsar!' one of the officers had said impressively—for this was in the days before Soviet commissars and Tchekas. It was a long time since Old Kolya had heard his full name used by anyone.

'Ah, well,' thought Old Kolya as he looked around his prison cell, 'it might have been a good holiday.'

It was a week after the beginning of his sentence that Kolya made acquaintance with the mouse. It happened in this way. One morning he awoke earlier than usual and, realising that there was no need to get up, lay tucked in his blanket and enjoyed the warm comfort. Presently he heard a faint scratching coming from

the floor near the bed. Peering over the side, Kolya saw a very small brown mouse busily engaged in nibbling a crust of bread which had been left over from last night's supper. The Government gave its prisoners plenty of black bread, so that one could afford to throw away a crust or two.

Kolya watched the mouse with great interest. Its movements were so dainty and the way it scratched at the hard bread with its tiny front feet was a masterpiece of delicacy.

Somehow or other, the mouse sensed that it was being watched, or it heard the man's heavy breathing. It jerked up its head, blinked its minute black eyes, and scuttled away and down a small hole in the floor. Kolya sighed regretfully.

A few days later the mouse paid another visit to the cell. A large brown crust had been left on the floor purposely and when the mouse came, Kolya was awake and waiting for it. This time, however, the mouse was not so shy. It looked up several times as if to gauge the distance between the bed and the crust and decided that there was no danger. So it went on nibbling energetically until its little round belly became quite obese.

The days went by, and gradually the mouse became accustomed to the man just as the man became accustomed to the mouse. Old Kolya never made a move in the mouse's direction and the mouse soon realised that there was nothing to fear from the big lumbering peasant. Besides, there were so many fat crusts lying about the floor.

One day, Kolya noticed that his mouse was making all sorts of strange movements around its customary piece of bread. Instead of nibbling in the usual way, it was poking the crust with its front feet and then pushing it with its nose.

'Now, my dear, what are you trying to do?' enquired Kolya, for by this time he could talk to the mouse without frightening it.

The mouse continued its pushing and pulling.

'Ah, ha!' cried the man, understanding. 'So you want to get the bread over to your hole, do you. Now, why should you want to do that, my dear? Why clutter up your house with crusts when you can come out here and eat to your heart's content? I know, you little rascal, you've started a family somewhere.'

The mouse stopped its work for a moment and blinked at the man.

'So that's it, eh?' continued Kolya. 'You've gone and taken a wife and now you're trying to bring the crust to her. What a

foolish mouse you are, to be sure. Of course, I realise that you couldn't remain a bachelor all your life—like myself for instance—but that's no reason for teaching your wife bad habits. Why should you slave to bring her bread when she can get it for herself? Now run along and bring her here—I'll put out an extra crust for the little darling.'

The mouse continued to wrestle with its heavy load nevertheless. The thing moved very slowly; in fact, you could hardly see it move at all. At that rate, it would take the mouse weeks to cover the distance of some three yards to its hole. Kolya said to himself that the simplest thing would be for him to pick up the crust and drop it near the entrance to his mouse's home.

'And if I do that, my dear,' Kolya addressed the mouse, 'then you'll have no more work to do and you and your spoilt wife will become two fat and lazy mice. Who ever heard of a lazy mouse? No. I shall not help you in your work.'

So for many days after that Kolya's mouse was very busy. It came out of its hole regularly every morning, ran to the crust and began biting at a small corner of it to loosen a crumb or two. With these crumbs in its mouth it would go scuttling back home, presumably to provide its mate with breakfast. After a decent interval it would return and, having satisfied its own hunger, begin the day's work of pushing and pulling.

When two weeks had elapsed in this way, Kolya noticed that the mouse made a great many more trips from the crust to its home.

'So, my little one,' commented the man. 'You've become a father, have you? Now you've got your work cut out for you. Fetch and carry, my darling, that's every father's job in life. Don't you wish you had remained a bachelor?'

The mouse seemed to understand the question and the quick jerk of its tiny head in Kolya's direction might have been a sign of agreement. On the other hand, it might not.

Old Kolya became more and more interested in his little brown mouse, and as he watched the creature slaving away at its task without remittance, he began to have all sorts of strange thoughts. Unused to abstract thought as his peasant's mind was, he was forced to express himself out loud to the mouse.

'You're a funny creature, my dear, and I don't say I envy you your life. And yet, you're a very brave little beast—brave and hard-working. Now take me, for instance. I would never

dream of working as hard as you do. Running back and forth—why, my dear, you must have covered half the distance to Petersburg by now—and always cheerful and willing. That crust is very heavy and it moves terribly slowly and yet you never get discouraged.

‘You know, mouse, if I had worked at home half as much as you’ve worked in the last few months, I would have become the richest *kulak* in the province. Even now, if I followed your example when I come out of prison, I would have time to become rich before I’m very old. They call me Old Kolya, you know, my dear, but that’s because I’m as lazy as an old man. In truth, I’m only about thirty-five winters old.

‘I shall be out of here before the summer is over. If I wanted to work like you, mouse dear, I could have a nice fat harvest before winter is on us. There is that piece of field over by the lane which I’ve never tilled properly: with plenty of manure I could make it bring up vegetables and sell them in the market for a good sum. Not much, perhaps, but enough to let me buy some hens for the winter. A dozen hens and a cock would be quite comfortable in my *isba* and the eggs and chickens would bring in some money, too. By next spring I would have more than enough for a couple of pigs.

‘Pigs, . . . now let me see . . . the sow would have her litter say in March and the piglets would be big enough for market about June. Eight fat piglets would buy a cheap cow, to be sure. And it wouldn’t be too late to put her to the bull—Alexis Mihailovitch will give me credit for the stud-fee until later.

‘What do you think of that, mouse? I could have a cow and a calf and pigs and hens by next summer. That is, if I really set to work when I come out of here. Why shouldn’t I, after all? You had your lazy days before you got married, mouse dear, and now you’re doing some hard work. Well, I’ve had enough lazy days in my life, God knows. You’re quite right, my little one, a man should have a wife and children and he should work to keep them comfortable and well fed. I’ve never said anything to anyone, you know, but I’ve had my eye on that young Mascha Alexandrovna for some time. She’s a fine handsome girl, although she does squint a little. But a squint does not prevent a woman from baking bread, does it? I’m tired of eating higgledy-piggledy meals and tired of cleaning out my own house. So if I become a rich peasant, Mascha won’t mind coming to live with me. Her father is a silly old fool, anyway.’

Kolya ceased talking because he suddenly noticed that the mouse had gone. 'Gone to see his dear little wife, of course,' commented the man—and then the arrival of his supper caused a diversion.

'You'll be out of here soon, you lazy *moujik*,' said the gaoler as he put down the dishes he had brought. He was a dirty brute, with the head of an ox and a nasty sneering mouth. Anyone could see that if the Government had not offered him a job as a gaoler he would have become a criminal himself. As things were, he had organised an efficient system of corruption by smuggling cigarettes and *vodka* in to the prisoners on payment of a fat bribe.

'Oh yes,' replied Kolya pleasantly, 'I shall be out soon. And do you know, my dear, before another summer comes I shall be a rich peasant in Bergomsk.'

'You'll be back in this cell, by the look of you,' sneered the gaoler and banged the door as he went out.

At last, the day came for Kolya's liberation. By this time, of course, the little brown mouse had achieved its object of bringing the bread crust over to its hole. Not for the same family, certainly, because a mouse must have a change of wife now and then.

When the gaoler came to set Kolya free, he made a tour of inspection to see that everything was in order.

'Go on, off with you!' he said, at last.

'Certainly, certainly,' replied Kolya meekly. 'I shan't be long, my dear, I just want to say good-bye to a friend of mine.' And Kolya made a funny whistling noise through his teeth—a signal which his mouse had come to recognise.

'A friend of yours . . .' growled the gaoler, scratching his head perplexedly. And then he saw the little brown mouse coming out of its hole.

'Damnation!' shouted the gaoler, 'Another one of those bloody mice.' And he stamped his foot down hard. There was just a thin squeal and then the gaoler pushed Kolya out into the corridor and slammed the door with a bang.

THIRST

A TRUE EPISODE

BY M. C. G. HOOTON.

'THE nearest I ever came to death,' said my companion, 'was about two hundred miles west of where we are now, in the belt of almost waterless country known in the Argentine as the semi-arid. I had to go out there a few years ago to value some property, and it was a miracle I didn't stay there.

'I knew there was no water in that district, so I made the ordinary arrangements for carrying a sufficient supply to last the short time I was going to be away from my jumping-off place, a *puesto* or mud hut in the open *campo* where there was a butt of rain-water. A Gaucho lived there, and he had the only water for a day's journey around. I took with me a half-breed guide called Lobos and a boy of about eighteen. We filled up the water-bags, and I sent on the boy twenty-four hours in advance with a led horse loaded with water, with orders to wait for us at the rendezvous. There wasn't the least hint of impending danger in my mind. It was all part of the day's work.

'Well, we started off the next evening, carrying enough water for ourselves, of course, and all through the night and part of the next day we travelled over the open *campo*. It's almost completely flat, and there are no landmarks that a European can see, so it's difficult to explain how anyone can keep a straight line across such a sea of scrubby grass. The natives have a gift that way we haven't got: some of them are far more Indian than Spanish, though it isn't considered polite to say so, and I suppose that's where they get the power from. Anyhow, they can lead you straight across an apparently pathless waste, even in the dark.

'Well, knowing that we had plenty of water ahead of us we only took enough to last us till we reached the boy and the pack-horse. We found him all right about five o'clock that evening, but we didn't find the water. It had been a hot day, and the wretched youth had drunk it all. It sounds incredible, but it's true enough. The first I knew about it was when I saw Lobos turn away from

the water-bags, where he had gone to get a little water for the horses, and go for the boy with his long *fajón*, the knife that Gauchos always carry stuck in their belts. He'd have killed him too, if I hadn't stopped him, and I don't know that I could have blamed him.

'There we were in the semi-arid, nearly twenty-four hours from the nearest water. Of course, in books this was the moment for a tribe of friendly Indians to turn up, but nothing like that happened to us. We held a sort of council, in which I spoke a little, Lobos rather less, and the boy not at all. For once the obvious thing was the right one. We gave the horses the splash of water we had left—the poor brutes only got a mouthful each—took a little asleep, and started back at sunset.

'I don't mind admitting I was worried. Somewhere over the horizon was that speck of a hut, and if Lobos made the smallest mistake—well, he'd never make another.

'You know what it's like in the open *campo*. You ride all day and it's still the same. You ride another day, and another, and the look of the country hasn't changed at all: you feel as if you haven't moved. One gets used to the size of the country, but this time it frightened me.

'The night was cloudy, and we made what going we could in the cool, as we knew that our real troubles were ahead of us, but of course we were thirsty by the morning. Towards dawn the clouds had thinned away, and the sun came up in a clear sky. I knew by the feel of the air that we were in for a scorcher, and in proportion as the heat increased and our tongues began to swell, so the journey became more like a nightmare.

'Fortunately we had four horses, so one of them was always resting, and they were all of the hardy criollo breed, but still there was a very great risk that they wouldn't last. But we didn't dare to stop: it was a race against time. All around us the heat-haze danced, all around there lay great pools of mirage water, and everything was so distorted that a tuft of grass ahead looked as tall as a man, and I couldn't judge whether it was a hundred yards away or half a mile. As for Lobos, he rode in a state of concentration such as I'd never seen before, and I didn't speak to him.

'The rest of that day must have passed somehow, but I don't remember much of it. I was just about insane and could think of nothing but water. I kept on imagining that I was at a place I know in the New Forest, where a brown stream falls a foot or

two into a deep pool where one can bathe : and all the time there was the ache in my throat : that, and the heat, and the flies. Once I remember trying to turn off to the left towards a particularly inviting lake that had suddenly appeared there, but Lobos struck me with his *rebenque* and pointed grimly forward.

'At last we saw the hut. A dark distorted blot lifted itself above the flickering line of the horizon, and Lobos turned in the saddle and grinned at me. I couldn't have spoken if I'd tried. My mouth was like a lime-kiln, and I'd have given ten years of my life to have been transported to that distant water-butt.

'It actually took us an hour to reach it, and that last hour was the worst time in my life. Again and again the hut receded from us into the heat-haze. However, "no hay mal que cien años dure," as the Argentines say : "there is no ill that lasts a hundred years," and eventually we rolled off our horses and made straight for the water.

'Luckily for us the Gaucho who lived there had just come back from his day's work, and was mending a bridle outside the *puesto*. One glance was enough to tell him what had happened. He jumped between us and the water-butt with his knife in his hand and pushed us back, forcing us to sit down against the wall. Then he fed us very slowly with a tea-spoon. Torture ! I've never known anything like it, but he did that for a quarter of an hour. Then he gave us half a pint each, and after a bit he let us drink all we wanted. I think there's no doubt he saved our lives, because if he hadn't stopped us we'd have drunk a gallon or two each and died of it.'

TWO IN CORSICA.

BY M. DE B. DALY.

It is an eight to ten hours' crossing from Nice to the Corsican ports, and as passage money covers food the company economically runs most of its boats by night; the hungriest passengers can hardly demand a meal between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. Knapsacks on back, we reached the small northern port of Calvi one brilliant May morning. The harbour is really so tiny that it seemed as if even our absurd little steamer must make the sea slop over the stone breakwaters, and we felt that it was one up to our captain that they were not awash.

From our scanty store of Corsican history we knew that Calvi had once been part of the great Republic of Genoa, whose galleys had sheltered there from roaming Algerian and Levantine pirates. When we saw the little old citadel still frowning down on the miniature harbour it was not hard to imagine those days. A great contorted prickly pear covered the cliff below the fort, and the crimson and yellow fruit, apparently dabbed haphazard and without stalks on to the fleshy leaves, were shining in the morning sunlight, giving a rather grotesque beauty to the cruel-looking plant.

We pushed ashore through a crowd of shouting Corsicans. Some were meeting or seeing off friends, others receiving or despatching cargo, but whatever their business or pleasure all were shouting. Leaving them to shout, we went through an archway to a wider quay where men in blue shirts and scarlet sashes squatted squabbling over lobster-pots. They took no notice of us, and we picked our way through them and round the spread brown nets in search of breakfast.

The keen air had made us hungry and when we saw a row of restaurants we had hopes of plenty of *café au lait*, rolls and butter. Corsicans, however, understand breakfast even less than other Frenchmen, for the largest and cleanest establishment could provide nothing but black coffee with plenty of sugar. When we asked for milk we were told that the goats had just left the town. We had not been long enough in Corsica to know that the goats

(cows are a negligible quantity) have always just left the town. After a week's wandering over the island we decided that huge herds of goats are milked at dawn and then taken out into the country, while the milk is hastily gobbled up by the townsfolk before tourists think of asking for it. Bread was almost as elusive. The bakers open their shops when the bread comes out of the oven, quickly distribute it, smoking hot, to a queue of waiting women and put up their shutters. As for butter, it was waste of breath to ask for it. The staple food of the inhabitants seems to be *petit beurre* biscuits, which never—well, hardly ever—failed us. With a packet of these and glasses of black coffee, we sat on the quayside watching the men chasing their lobsters, which were always wriggling out of the pots. Beyond them we could see, a mile or so away, an enticing sickle of yellow sand round turquoise water, and, far away, high, pale-blue mountains streaked with shining patches of snow.

We soon started for the alluring beach, but had not gone far towards it when we were startled by hearing a loud, guttural, and unmistakably German voice exclaim:

'Auf Wiedersehen, Marie, mein Schatz!'

Some rocks hid the speaker from sight, and we were passing on discreetly when the same voice cried passionately:

'Adieu, Josephine, adieu! Henriette, mein Liebling, adieu!'

This was too much for our curiosity. As the German seemed to be taking leave of several ladies at once there seemed no danger of interrupting a *tête-à-tête*, and we wandered down to the shore. At first we saw no one but a big man in a striped pink shirt, linen trousers and a wide palm-leaf hat. There was no sign whatever of Marie, Josephine, or Henriette. Then we discerned, in the shadow of a rock, another German, wearing riding-breeches and a Stetson, operating a cinema camera. The big man, we now saw, held a box from which he was releasing, one by one, some large beetles. A few fell clumsily to the ground, but others spread their wings and flew away, and to each of these he addressed words of passionate endearment, while his friend stolidly wound the handle of the machine. He told us they were making natural history pictures for schools, but why they came to Corsica to do it, and how he knew that all the beetles were ladies, we did not discover. Perhaps the beetle-film was only an interlude to a Wild West picture, which would account for the South American touch about their dress.

The turquoise waters and golden sands quite came up to expectation, but we had not come to Corsica for bathing, and the next afternoon we left by a rickety postal car in the direction of Ajaccio. Lobsters are for ever linked with Calvi in our memory, as they were given us at every meal; it might easily have been the same elsewhere, but we did not know it.

We had decided to stay the night at a little town called Galleria, about forty kilometres south of Calvi, and the only place (we were assured) where a night's lodging could be had. Certainly there was no sign of habitation as we trundled along, or of human being to justify our incessant tooting, but when we reached the branch road to Galleria the driver asked if he should set us down. He said that Galleria was five kilometres out of our way, and if we continued on the main road we should find, about two kilometres farther on, an hotel. When we seemed surprised at this information he admitted that the hotel was not quite finished.

'There may be no beds,' he added, 'but if you speak to them in Corsican, I am sure they will give you mattresses on the floor.'

Though French is the official language of the island the people speak Italian among themselves, calling it Corsican. They were surprised and pleased at our knowledge of it and seemed to think we must be rewarded. Without it, no doubt we should have been taken tamely to Galleria.

We agreed that it was well worth sleeping on a mattress on the floor to save five kilometres on next day's trek, which would be a long one. The sun was setting and the *maquis* looked incredibly lonely—nothing but low bushes on gently sloping hills and in a wide valley, with a sandy road winding through them. The driver assured us there were no bandits, and it seemed cowardly to shirk, so we dismounted and he tooted himself off to Galleria.

Half an hour later we came to a very small cottage where a number of grimy charcoal-burners sat drinking red wine under a pergola. An unshaven, amiable-looking man came forward and we asked him if this was the hotel. He said it was.

'Can you give us a room?'

He looked at us in blank astonishment. 'A room? A room! Oh no, that is impossible!'

'Do all these men sleep here, then?'

'No, they are just having a drink, but you see, my wife and I have a good many children.'

It would be difficult to find our way back to Galleria, and

the idea of sleeping in the *maquis*, where there might be charcoal-burners, if not bandits, round any bush, was most unpleasant. We said that surely he could give us mattresses on the floor.

'Well, there is the shop,' he agreed doubtfully, but our knowledge of Corsican made him think we might be ready to put up with Corsican ways and he showed it us. There was space for little but the counter, and it was so blackened with smoke that it looked as if the charcoal-burners had been working there. It was evidently not the first time the 'shop' had served as a bedroom, as the owner was full of resource.

'One mattress on the floor,' he said in a determined way, 'and the other on the counter. My wife will arrange it well, as soon as she returns, and then we will have supper.'

We asked if there would be a basin and a jug of water, but when he understood why we wanted them he showed us that a stream ran just outside the door; jugs and basins are superfluous in the *maquis*.

We sat under the pergola waiting for the woman to return and discussing whether we should sleep with the door open (there was no window) or shut. Possible bandits or certain suffocation?

Presently our host remarked: 'If you care to walk another three kilometres there is a *maison-cantonnière*; the *cantonnier* and his wife have beds for travellers.'

'Good heavens!' we exclaimed, springing to our feet, 'why couldn't you say so sooner?'

We shouldered our knapsacks and started. The man, as much relieved as we were, went a little way with us, explaining short cuts through the *maquis*.

A huge red-bearded *cantonnier* and his little dark wife were amazed to see, just as they were lighting their lanterns, two Englishwomen appear from a by-path through the *maquis*. We asked for beds and food.

'We have a bed,' the woman answered, 'and when the goats are milked and the bread is baked we will have supper.' This time the goats were run to earth.

We went indoors and the woman lit a wick which was floating in oil in a high glass stand, stirred the embers on the hearth, and threw some wood on them. The fire began to crackle and flicker, and a fragrant steam came out of a huge iron pot hung on a chain over it. A girl brought in a pail of warm, frothing milk, and dipped out bowls of it for us, for we were tired and thirsty. A

little later we sat down to supper with the *cantonnier* and his family. The woman ladled thick savoury soup from the pot on to plates, and there were fried eggs and goats' milk cheese and pale red wine. All this good food and drink at the end of a day full of movement and novelty made us very sleepy, and we soon asked to be taken to our room, where we were asleep before the scrap of candle in the neck of a bottle had guttered out. Afterwards we learned that the *maisons cantonnières* in lonely neighbourhoods are equipped by the Government for lodging wayfarers, and the *cantonnier* may not charge for giving them a bed. He can ask what he likes for any food he gives, and some take advantage of this, but these people were honest.

Next morning we rose before the goats had gone and drank large bowls of milk before starting for what the road-mender poetically called 'the mouth of the mountains.' This was the Col Palmarello—the musical Italian names are everywhere—which we reached after an hour's steady climb. From it we looked over gullies of red and green brushwood to a peacock-blue sea, rimmed with yellow sand, from which great crimson cliffs rose right and left, fading into pale mauve and paler blue headlands. Leaving this intoxicating orgy of colour, we plunged down into the *maquis*, and nearly succeeded in losing ourselves in it, for Corsican paths have an inveterate habit of starting well and ending badly. There was absolute solitude and we did not even see or hear the goats whose tracks were everywhere.

After midday we reached an ugly, scattered little village, whose only pleasant feature was its lovely name of Partinello. Two witch-like women appeared at the door of a grubby little inn, and we asked if they could give us a meal. They replied by demanding our nationality and when we said we were English looks of cupidity passed between them. They gave us a shockingly bad meal and charged us according to the supposed length of our purses. However, what you lose on the swings you gain on the roundabouts.

That evening we reached Porto, tucked into a fertile cleft of purple rock. Here, too, a cracking mediæval watch-tower mounted guard over a tiny quay; the little harbour, the quay, the tower, the beach, were all deserted, and we bathed undisturbed in the clear water.

We dined by the light of a candle under a pergola outside the inn, while the usual charcoal-burners sat around drinking wine. The room had two beds and quite a number of accessories, and

next morning we were each given a cup of genuine *café au lait*. This, however, exhausted all resources, as when we asked for more we were told that the goats had just gone.

Soon after leaving by the postal car for Ajaccio the luxuriant vegetation disappeared as if swept away by a pestilence, and above and below the road there was a region of grotesque red rocks, tumbled and piled together like monster statues which had been hurled pell-mell into gullies stretching down to the sea. These were the famous 'calanches' of Piana.

We did not see much of Ajaccio, for after reaching it we heard that next morning the weekly boat went down to Bonifacio, so we made a supreme effort, rose at four, and boarded it.

About half-way down the coast of the island we put in at what the guide-books call the 'flourishing port' of Propriano. It may flourish, but not on tourists. Twice a week during the summer a number of them land for several hours; there is nothing whatever to see, nothing whatever to do, and nothing whatever to eat. The restaurants provide no food till noon, when the steamer leaves, the cafés give only black coffee and aniseed water, leaving the passengers to seek *petits beurrés* at the grocers', since bread is unprocurable until whatever time the bake may happen to leave the ovens. Corsicans, of course, can sit and sip coffee and aniseed water by the hour: we could not. We went back to the quay and watched our boat take on a cargo of donkeys. The Corsican breed is little larger than a mastiff, but as obstinate as a mule. The drivers whacked them vigorously with heavy sticks until clouds of dust arose, but they only seemed to enjoy it; the foals cocked their fluffy ears and galloped joyfully about the quay; the drivers sweated and swore, the onlookers jeered. In the end each animal was hauled up the gangway by four men, one to each hind leg, one to each ear, and all brandishing sticks.

As we went south the coast changed its fierce and rugged cliffs for countless little sandy bays, each rounded off by a low jut of rock, so that the coast-line looked like a fringe of yellow lace. There were hundreds of deserted beaches glowing in the afternoon sunshine and not a bather on one of them.

The approach to Bonifacio is unique. There is no sign of town or harbour till suddenly a jumble of houses appears, apparently about to fall over a high cliff into the sea; below a huge cavern yawns like the mouth of an ocean monster waiting to swallow them when they finally topple.

Sesamelike, the steamer hooted, and an opening appeared between the tottering town on the right and a red-capped lighthouse on the left. The steamer gingerly threaded its way through a rocky defile, guns glowered down on either side, and here and there cubist houses peered inquisitively over the edge of the shelving rock. The change of scene from the pale waters and low serrated coast was so startling that it seemed as if the vessel and its passengers must have been mysteriously whisked into the middle of a fairy-tale.

As the boat slid into the hidden harbour a thunderstorm burst furiously, and we were literally washed off the deck on to the quay. We dashed into the open door of what appeared to be a house. More unreality! There was no house! There was, indeed, a frontage of solid masonry, with real doors and windows, but behind it a huge cave stretched far back into the rock. The dim recesses were filled with great jars, barrels and packing-cases. Even for Corsica, it was theatrical.

'No sign of Ali Baba yet!' we whispered inevitably. 'Shall we fill our knapsacks with gold pieces?'

'Too heavy! I couldn't carry another ounce.'

The rain stopped as suddenly as it had begun, and we left the cave and climbed a steep way into the town, through a dark, deserted guard-house and tunnel-like alleys to the main street. We found a café where a melancholy woman knitting behind a high desk rather unwillingly provided us with glasses of black coffee, but of course refused us more than one each.

'I have no more; I shall make more to-morrow, but not to-day. Yes, if you like, I will give you some water.'

With tumblers of flat water before us we sat watching slim Senegalese soldiers leading horses up the street. An old man sipping aniseed said:

'The water is bad in this town. And very dear. Seventy-five centimes the barrel. Are you going to stay at the hotel?'

We said we supposed so. He placed one open palm to his throat, the other to his lips, and closed an eye. This meant: 'You will be fleeced, but don't say I said so.'

'Well, can you suggest anything better?'

'Where I thrust my hand in, my arm follows,' he replied oracularly, which apparently meant that having begun to help us he would continue.

He took us to the top of a very high house where an old Italian

woman received us in a spotless kitchen. There were two enormous earthenware jars standing in corners, and at first we felt a little nervous in case there might be bandits in them. We made some discreet enquiries and the old woman assured us that one contained water, the other oil. She provided us at once with an excellent room, but shook her head at the suggestion of a meal. We dumped our knapsacks and returned to the quayside, where our old Mentor had told us there was a restaurant as good as any in Paris.

Everything about it was promising—'Restaurant des Gourmands'—its spacious airiness, its shining red-tiled floor, its little tables with clean white cloths, and above all a most savoury smell coming from a door in the background. But there was no fulfilment. The hostess (women seem the dominant sex in Corsica) quite refused to give us dinner. She said she already had enough diners. We insisted that two more could not matter. She shook her head. She said she had not enough food, and we retorted that she could go out and buy eggs. She shook her head again. We tried flattery, repeating the old man's words, but she merely said there were other restaurants, and we retired, defeated.

There *were* other restaurants, but they were foul and dark, the merest cabarets, so in spite of the old man's warning we dined at the hotel, and did not, after all, regret it. The waiter, with an unlit cigarette hanging from the corner of his mouth, wore a Norfolk jacket, light-grey trousers, and a cloth cap, as he handed the lobster and other things. We reflected that if his dress was unconventional, so was ours.

Bonifacio, perched on its jutting rock, is everlastingly raked fore and aft by a wind that will not let you speak or think, and we decided to start on our northern trail next morning. The old woman offered us coffee before starting, but in reply to our hope that it might be *café au lait* said that the goats would not reach the town so early. At Bonifacio, therefore, they come in before being milked while elsewhere they go out after milking.

Sardinia and her attendant island Maddalena were sparkling in pale colours as we started, but we had a long day ahead and could not stay to admire her. We were given a lift of some miles, sitting on sulphur sacks in a cart, and another, wedged between kegs, in a car, but we also put in about thirty kilometres on foot and were tired when we reached, at nightfall, the village of Piannotola. Here it was a pleasant surprise to find the 'Hôtel des

Étrangers' ready to provide both food and lodging without a murmur.

Technically our rooms were upstairs, but there was no staircase. This superfluity of civilisation was replaced by a ladder which led out of the public bar, and as there were no passages either, its head emerged from a hole in the floor of another guest-room. By the time we had finished dinner a charcoal-burner was already in bed there, but he was not fussy, nor were we. As we passed through he called out, '*Bonne nuit, mesdemoiselles!*' and we politely replied, '*Pardon, monsieur, et bonne nuit!*'

The mountains had been beckoning irresistibly, so next morning we took an early train to Vizzavona, perched high in a vast forest of dark pines and bright-green beeches. The air was sweet with scent of cyclamen, and now and then, through the branches, there were glimpses of the silvery crest of Monte d'Oro.

It took us two days to tramp thence down to Ajaccio, from which we were sailing. For the most part the road was abominable, carved and chopped and rutted by traffic which was quite invisible, for we never saw a wheel. Pattering flocks of goats were everywhere, with lads in charge, and even when we could not see them the musical tinkle of their bells could be heard among the asphodels on the hillside.

Lunch, on our last day, seemed likely to be as frugal as breakfast. At the only provision shop in the only village on our way we could not buy even *petits beurres*; there were plenty of tins, but they were all empty, and there seemed to be nothing but darning-wool and peppermints for sale. Somebody said that 'the butcher who lives by the monument' might have eggs, but we could find neither monument nor butcher. Then some bright spirit showed us a piece of walled-in land on which it was hoped some day to have a monument, and introduced us to a man living near by who once had been a butcher. He had no eggs, but offered us a tin of tunny, and opened it for us.

Bread was the next problem. There were two bakeries, but both were shut. Then we saw above the door of a squalid cottage a notice-board inscribed '*Hôtel de l'Univers*,' and on the doorstep below it was an old woman shelling peas, and a girl washing clothes in a tin basin. We asked them for bread. The old woman did not answer, but the girl replied shortly:

'We do not sell bread. There are bakeries.' Slap! Slap! went the clothes.

'But they are shut.'

'They will open in two hours.'

'We want bread now.'

'We don't sell it,' repeated the girl, and furiously assaulted the clothes.

'Perhaps you would do so as a favour?'

She smiled brilliantly, wiped her sudgy hands on her apron, fetched an enormous loaf, and cut a wide triangle from it.

Our boat did not sail till nearly midnight, and we had a last dip in the Corsican sea that evening. As we swam in the amber waters opposite the Iles Sanguinaires—so blue as to belie their unpleasant name or to suggest the most aristocratic of islands—we saw a funeral pass on the road above. The hearse rattled gaily along, followed by a stream of little carriages, each drawn by two galloping, long-tailed horses. A few minutes later, barely leaving time to dump the coffin at the cemetery, back they all came in reverse order. The horses, now bound stablewards, pranced more cheerfully than ever, the drivers flourished their whips still more gaily, and the hearse looked particularly festive, as most of the walking mourners, in blue clothes and scarlet sashes, had crowded into it.

After we were back in a civilisation which can supply milk at all hours, we were asked if Corsica were not very full of colour. We agreed that sky and land and water had all the hues of the rainbow, and that its funerals were the most cheerful we had ever seen.

Bordighera, Italy.

I REMEMBER?

BY PAT WEBB.

WINYARD persuaded me to make that trip up the Mississippi. It was unthinkable, he said, to go to New Orleans and not come up to see an old friend in St. Louis. And to make the journey in any other way than up the Mississippi itself was to throw away adventure and colour and life with both hands. Besides, he added, it was an education for any European. But then, Winyard is Mississippi-mad.

So, my business completed, I bought a copy of *Tom Sawyer*, and wrote to Winyard to expect me some time fairly soon. Then, passing by the elegant steam packets with their bright paint and shady decks, I booked a passage in a tubby stern-wheeler named *Louisiana Sue*. Not through any fault of mine should the Romance of the Old South escape me.

Day after day we pushed up against that vast yellow flood, past bayous, breakwaters, cotton fields, rice fields, chutes, lowlands and bluffs, little townships and great shipping points; past government patrol boats, yachts, steamers, shantyboats, tugs, gay houseboats and endless processions of log rafts. Places with magic names slipped by—Baton Rouge, Bayou Sara, Natchez—and places as magically unknown peeped at us over the top of the high, protecting levees.

I began to lose count of time and distance. There was always that sinuous, tawny expanse of water, always those moving banks on either side, now so close that every leaf and blade of grass was visible, and now a far dark band between the river and the sky.

We called at few places, for our cargo was nearly all for St. Louis, and we had little accommodation for passengers. But one particularly hot afternoon we rounded a steep wooded bluff and pushed in towards the wharf of a typical small riverside town.

I shall remember it for ever, and yet perhaps I have not the right to say I remember it.

As the stern-wheeler turned, her clumsy, blunt bow sent an unbroken wave travelling in against the pier-heads. And suddenly the little group on the levee came to life. A few old negroes, a

planter or two, and some tattered youngsters—they had all been standing there as still as the afternoon heat, every detail pictured sharp and steady on the water below them. But now the wave shattered the polished surface into a thousand shifting fragments. And instantly everybody moved, as if they had been no more than the reflection of those bright figures on the water.

The wave smacked the old wooden posts and splashed back upon the succeeding wave. Bells rang, our paddles lumbered into reverse, and slowly we drew in and made fast.

There seemed little purpose for our call, for with the exception of a few bags of bone manure that were heaved over the side, nobody landed and nobody came aboard.

Little darkies in ragged trousers and gay cotton shirts swung on the gangplank, their black feet scuffling in the fine tawny dust. Two old fellows with woolly beards drew up to the edge and started a slow conversation with an invisible being in the engine-room. They spat and murmured and spat again, casually and yet skilfully, between the boat-side and the quay.

A portly white person, whom I took to be a storekeeper, peered at the sacks of manure and made mystical signs to the captain, who appeared to take no notice at all. A magnificent negro in a hat that would have been the size of a bicycle-wheel, if the straw had not been pulled out and unwound, flung out his fishing line on the other side of the wharf, and sat down on the ground before a fat old negress with a basket of pies.

There was scarcely a sound anywhere. The boat rose and fell very slightly from the after-wash of her approach. The ropes creaked, pulled and slackened. The murmur of the darkies' talk rose and fell, too. And soon my eyelids lifted and drooped, lifted and closed . . . It seemed as if the air, laden with sunlight and colour, could bear no more—that sound itself must sink like a pebble to the bottom, lost in sight and scent.

All day I had suffered with a headache—nothing definite, but just a tight knot of irritation and strain somewhere between my eyes. Now, half-dozing, half-waking, I felt as though this pain took on a certain shape. It seemed like a hard bud tapping against my eyeballs, as the tips of the plane-tree used to tap against my nursery window, when I was a child.

Lord, what a garden that was . . . My pain assumed a more gracious shape, like a delicate rose shoot, swayed, as a flower is swayed in the wind, by the glancing colours on shore and the faint

motion of the steamer. Now, like a flower, it seemed to open and droop, to droop and fall into nothing.

Off shore there came the scent of magnolias.

From under heavy lids, bemused by the sun, I stared at the little town—what could be seen of its roofs and chimneys, the waterfront and cotton fields beyond. And as I looked the conviction grew in me that it was all remembered. This unknown place insisted on being familiar. And I caught myself whispering 'Yes, that's just as it was'—I, who had never been on the Mississippi before, nor to any other place in the States for that matter, except New Orleans, and before that, New York.

The wooden gables, the old tiles, the bluff behind the town, all fitted into a prepared space in my mind—a space that had been empty, but waiting, unknown to me.

It is a sensation which nearly everybody knows. It had often happened to me before, but never so powerfully nor so unreasonably.

Suddenly our whistle blew. A voice overhead bellowed, 'Hey, nigger, jump to it!' The bell rang furiously. Feet thudded on the deck. The little crowd about the landing-stage jostled one another, grinned and spat and gave advice.

In a few minutes we should be out in midstream again, and I should never know whether that little main street behind the levee curved so, as memory—oh, memory of what?—already told me that it did.

'Hi!' I shouted up to the wheel-house. 'Hi, Captain, wait a minute! I'm going ashore.'

A long nose was thrust out of the doorway. The shiny peak of a dirty white cap snapped angrily in the sunlight.

'Naw, suh, yo' tol' me St. Louis'—with elaborate patience—'This ain't that place.'

'No, I know it isn't. I'm sorry, but I find I must get off here. I can catch the next boat on to St. Louis. But I'm afraid I must stop here.'

Captain spat into the cuspidor, which stood by the wheel.

'Aw,' he said, and gave it up. 'Hey, Spike, heah's a gen'leman stopping off. Hustle yo'self!'

I had not unpacked most of my belongings, so that in less than five minutes I was on the wharf with my two suitcases dumped beside me. Captain gave me a frigid salute and looked the other way. Evidently it was not a pleasant sight.

Spike, too, considered me as one fallen from grace. He chucked

his head up and rolled his eyes at the delighted audience on the quay.

'Thank yo', suh. Obligated, suh,' he conceded. But he might have been scattering dust to dust.

I turned my back on the *Louisiana Sue*, and suddenly felt the fool I must have looked. Certainly I was not lost on my audience. Even the fisherman propped his rod against the manure sacks and came over to gape. New-comers hurried up from the street. And soon there were four fat negresses, instead of one, all with baskets on their arms, all exactly like each other, except that each seemed fatter than the last. Obviously I was an event.

Presently the portly person, who had been exchanging signals with my late captain, pushed forward and asked if there was any way in which he could help me. He had a pleasant Southern voice, gentle and slow. But how he spoke at all was a mystery, for, though his mouth was open, it seemed to hang so from heat and breathlessness rather than for the purpose of speech, because his lips and jaws never moved. He was large in face, as in figure, and almost dazzlingly pale.

'I find I shall have to spend a day or two here,' I told him.

'I wonder if there is somewhere where I could put up.'

'Certainly, suh. There is Poolley's.' And then he added conclusively: 'I am Mistah Poolley.'

There seemed nothing more I could do about it. And so Mr. Poolley evidently felt, for with a courtly bow he waved me in the direction of an antique Ford car standing at the other end of the pier.

In we scrambled, while willing dark hands dumped my suitcases and the two sacks of manure in the back seat.

The little street into which we turned was exactly as I expected it would be. But this was not surprising. Indeed, I should have been surprised only if it had been different. Where we bumped over from the levee there were a few shops and business houses, mostly wooden-faced buildings with a high wooden side-walk running before their doors. Farther on the street curved sharply, and here a double row of maples flung a pleasant shade over houses, which stood back from the road behind deep porches and little gardens with low, white palings.

At the bend, midway between the commercial and residential quarter stood Poolley's—a large weatherbeaten building, which had developed on the down-town side into a general store, but faced up the maple avenue with a bland and private appearance, except for

some smudgy hieroglyphics over the porch, only distinguishable after careful study as Poolley's Family Hotel.

We stopped first at the entrance to the store, to be relieved of the bone manure. And then, the observed of some half-dozen customers of Mr. Poolley's, we rounded the corner to the hotel entrance, where we were met by one of the four stout negresses I had noticed on the pier. Somewhat breathless from her race with the decrepit Ford, she accorded us a royal welcome by walking backwards up the front steps and down the hall, where she disappeared into an inner shade, save for the gleaming whites of her eyes.

She had a beautiful voice and a light hand with pastry. Truda they called her. All day long it sounded through the house, like the clapper in a bell—Truda, Truda ! But she told me with some pride that she had been christened Gertrude Elizabeth D'Alroy Summers.

She told me ? Surely she must have told me. And yet, as far as I knew, we had never exchanged a single word.

Mr. Poolley himself showed me my bedroom, and afterwards escorted me round the house. He then pressed me into a rocking-chair on the front porch and departed in the direction of the store, swathing himself as he went in a long white apron, which turned down double over his stomach and ended in a deep fringe.

There were two other guests on the porch, evidently relaxing after lunch and the trials of the morning. They were polite, even friendly. And after a little conversation on the heat, where I had come from and where I was going, the price of cotton and the cost of labour, they produced hip-flasks. Presently, what with the delicious sound of ice chinking against glass, and something pleasanter to do with our tongues than merely wagging them, we felt well enough acquainted to lapse into silence.

The older man—Jackson, he said he was—heaved his long legs on to the rail of the verandah and sank his chin upon his chest. The young one leaned back and adjusted his wide-brimmed hat so that nothing could be seen of his face but a rather finely modelled mouth and chin. For a second his head was bared, and I noticed that his hair was as white as his shirt front. They gleamed oddly in the shadow with the young, brown face between.

Was it due to some curious lack of pigment—or whatever it is that colours hair ? Or had he got a shock in the night ? As if he felt my eyes still upon him, he turned his masked face towards me and smiled blindly, already half-asleep.

Outside the maple trees wove green scallops of shadow, freckled with light, up and down the dusty borders.

Over the way a little urchin in blue overalls and bare feet came down his garden path and proceeded to climb his front gate. Four or five times he did this, trying on each occasion to make a more intricate and dangerous business of it. In a moment another boy appeared a few gates up, and a fierce rivalry went on until a voice broke out of an upper window: 'Wilbur! Wilbur! What did your Pappy tell you?'

Wilbur and his rival raced away to some remoter spot, their brown feet thudding in the soft dust, their little fists whacking hip and thigh to fabulous feats of horsemanship.

There was nothing left but sun and moving shadow, and one speckled grey hen taking a dry shampoo down by Poolley's fence.

I settled back into that mood of unfathomed recollection. Already my few days in the *Louisiana Sue* seemed years away. My stay in New Orleans, and before that in the freight steamer and in New York, were dim and impersonal events. Can a man become someone else and never know it? Can he take on another's past and find it native and familiar? In an uneasy doze, I fancied myself leaning over a deep forest pool, and seeing reflected there not my own face, but another face quite different from my own. And I was not in the least surprised. That was what woke me up—I was not in the least surprised.

I struggled out of the rocker, along the path and out on to the road. A little lower down than Poolley's general store, and on the other side of the street, stood a grey building with a deep balcony under which I discovered the legend 'Quitteville Post Office.'

Quitteville—it meant nothing to me. It had not even the vague familiarity of a name seen on a map. Half-relieved, and yet half-disappointed, I crossed the road to reassure myself as to Mr. Poolley.

The store was low, and very dark, chiefly because the windows were so full of specimens of stock, from chicken food to calico dresses, that what light there was could only enter through the doorway; and there only round about the substantial figures of Mr. Poolley's cronies.

Inside Mr. Poolley himself moved, invisible except for his large pale face and expanse of white apron. Around bales and barrels and sacks he floated, like some great bellied fish in a deep, dim tank. Only his pleasant voice, proceeding mysteriously from that gaping, but immobile, mouth, proved him warmly human after all.

Down the street there was not a soul to be seen, except a barber standing outside his door, and a young negro painting an empty shop green and black. Occasionally an old car, high in the body and as unsteady on the wheels as Mr. Poolley's, would rattle by. And once a powerful, streamlined roadster flashed past in a storm of dust.

I turned and made for the levee. It was hotter there, but the lapping of the water against the boats seemed refreshing in itself. Presently I came to a grove of sycamores, cotton-wood and willows, which ran along the bank of a chute, or backwater. Through occasional clearings I could catch a glimpse of little wooden cabins flanked by a few rows of beans, a cabbage patch and a chicken coop or two, and beyond the unending cotton fields.

Leaving the river-bank, I climbed up a slope and sat down under a giant cotton-wood tree. Farther on I could just make out a low wall, and on the other side what was evidently clearer ground, planted with laurel, live oak and cypress. I smelt again the bitter-sweet scent of magnolia. Somebody's garden.

Even now, closed in as I was from people or happenings of any sort, wrapt in a green shade, silent, unthinking, I was still absorbed in that mood of inward prophecy, which every moment saw fulfilled. Wandering along the path, I knew at every turn what I should see, even as I saw it. If I snapped a twig, the sound it made was no more than a staccato echo of a sound already heard. The very air I breathed seemed old—not stale, but fragrant with the past.

The sun was getting low, and yet the hours did not seem to pass for me, hidden in some recess of time, some age-old moment that somehow had never faded out.

It was dusk, or very nearly, when a red cardinal flew out of a willow down by the river-bank and flashed away over the garden behind me. I scrambled to my feet and climbed across the low wall.

There was nothing of clairvoyance in my actions. I could not foresee the consequence of anything I did. I only knew, as I raised my hand or moved my foot, that so it must be—for so it had *been*.

Beyond, the trees were still fairly close, but they had evidently been trimmed back. And underfoot, instead of dead wood and creepers, there was thick, short grass. A perfect avalanche of scent seemed to pour upon me as I brushed my way down the other side of the slope. I could not give a name to most of the flowers, nor could I see more than their faintly luminous petals swaying overhead. Magnolia, of course, was there, and viburnum and sweet olive,

already drenched in dew, laurel, and occasionally a bitter-orange tree, laden at once with fruit and flowers.

I seemed to be making a curve back towards the river, when I came upon a sunken garden—a rose garden, judging from the scent—but in the darkness it looked like a pool with blossoms floating on it. On the far side a flight of shallow steps led up to a deep piazza, and beyond, I could just make out, half-hidden by a giant laurel, the angle of a house.

So far this curious mood had been a sort of game. At first it was fun to test this odd feeling of familiarity. I was amused to begin with, then a little uneasy, and finally, as it stalked me down, I grew oppressed. Sometimes it was the merest nuance, which intrigued and provoked ; at another, it was an overwhelming conviction, strong in my nostrils, and heavy on my hands.

Now, in an instant, the whole experience quickened. The leaves and flowers about me tossed up in a sudden wind, and I felt caught forward, as if on a wave hurrying ashore.

—‘ Well,’ she said, ‘ there are three steps down where you are standing. And there are three steps up just here.’

She was sitting on the balustrade which bounded the other side of the sunken garden.

Three steps down.

‘ May I pick a rose ? ’ I asked. ‘ —for you,’ I added.

‘ If you want to. But I can pick them any time, you know.’

‘ All right, then—for myself.’

She laughed and answered me, though what she said I could not hear. Yet I was close to her, for she leaned towards me over the balustrade as I came up the steps. A branch of the laurel kept a shadow over her eyes, but her mouth showed in the moonlight full and beautifully modelled—like the young man on Poolley’s verandah.

I was in half a mind to apologise and go. And yet somehow I could not. This time had been entrusted to me. If it was not mine, neither was it mine to throw away. Besides, the feeling grew upon me that, if by any chance I shook off this queer pre-existed mood, I should be lost. I was convinced I should not be able to get back to my old self, and that to fail in my present state would be to fall for ever down some space in time. It was a nightmare I used to have as a child—funny to find it again in this garden—when I shot out beyond the earth’s orbit and whirled down between the stars.

I kissed her. And she smiled a little absently, as a dreamer smiles at some remote delight.

I held her in my arms, and the mood which had hung upon me seemed to dissolve. Nothing seemed to exist at all, except the scent of the flowers and the faint sounds of night. I had no memory, neither my own or another's.

Up from the river-bank there stole the voice of a negro singing, gentle with distance and muted, as of one drugged with sleep.

The days passed—how many I had no idea. All time seemed the same. Mr. Poolley floated in and out of his store. And Truda rolled her great eyes at me, and heaped my plate with pies of every imaginable ingredient. Jackson and his young friend dropped in of an afternoon. The urchins over the way fought other urchins, and excited shrill admonitions from behind starched lace curtains. And at night there was the garden beyond the woods—and delight beyond words.

After that first day in Quitteville I had lost the sense of inexplicable remembrance, or at least it was less vivid and disturbing. Since to-day was like yesterday, it mattered less that it was also like some other day, recognisable, though unknown.

But gradually the thought of Winyard began to disturb me. I might have sent him a wire excusing my delay, yet I could not bring myself to do it—why, I did not know. It was simply a feeling of great reluctance, which I could not explain even to my own satisfaction. Better to go on to St. Louis, and then return to Quitteville again as soon as possible.

Finally, I arranged with the owner of a freighter to take me up as far as Memphis, where I hoped to get a river packet on to St. Louis.

However, things did not work out according to plan. For at Cairo I was carried off the boat and taken to hospital, where I stayed for the best part of six weeks, suffering with sunstroke and an acute bout of my old enemy, malaria.

It was a miserable business, and the doctors were loath to discharge me at the end of that time, but I fought to go—anything to get away from the Mississippi. Never, as long as I lived, would I look upon that river again. It was agony even to hear from my bed the hooting of the steamers and the long-drawn wail of the tugs. My world had suddenly come to an end, and I was housed with a ghost—perhaps myself a ghost.

It all came out so casually . . . Winyard was talking. Good

fellow, he had come tearing down to Cairo the moment the authorities notified him of my illness. And since then he had visited me every week-end, and any other odd time he could manage, bringing with him books and flowers and, best of all, his solid, tonic personality. He possessed a fund of good sense and good stories, and, what appealed to me most just then, an inexhaustible knowledge of the Lower River from St. Louis to New Orleans. He was keen to know what I thought of it all, and I could have listened for hours on end to his yarns of river towns and river folk.

But somehow I had shrunk from telling him about Quitteville. It was my own special property, a thing to be drawn upon after he must leave me. Besides——

Then, one day it escaped me. I mentioned that I had put in at a little place called Quitteville.

‘You must have gotten the name wrong,’ he said. ‘Mainton is about there on the east bank.’

‘No. This was Quitteville all right—on the west bank. As a matter of fact I spent a night or two there.’

He looked at me sharply.

‘But you couldn’t have,’ he exclaimed.

‘My dear fellow, why ever not?’

Outside the window, close to the head of my bed, the lime trees plunged in a sudden gust of wind, and all the leaves blew back, as if a storm were coming up. I could hear the twigs beating against the pane.

Winyard picked up a medicine bottle and weighed it in his hand. Then he said :

‘I guess you’ve made a mistake somehow. Quitteville doesn’t exist any more. It was flooded out five years back. There was some talk that a Mainton gang cut the levee to ease the pressure on the east bank. I don’t know. Anyways Quitteville was taken unawares, and they were nearly all drowned. Worst thing in years . . .’

His voice grew faint, boomed large again, and then once more receded, like an imperfectly tuned radio.

‘. . . A funny thing, I knew a guy who went through it. Poor devil, he lost his memory. Doesn’t know a darn thing about it now, except what he’s been told. Only just put in for the night, seemingly. Didn’t belong there. And then . . . he lost his memory . . . lost his memory . . . his memory . . .’

Jersey, C.I.

A TRAGEDIENNE'S TRAGEDY.
AN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY MYSTERY.

BY EMILY H. STEPHENS.

AMONG the minor experiences of life few are more surprising than the sudden, and often unaccountable, vibrations of curiosity which from time to time beset us. I do not mean curiosity concerning our neighbours, friends, or exalted personages, but the unexpected flare of interest in some problem, or place, or it may be, in someone long since dead. Just a name, a sound, a glimpse of colour will kindle it, and we are agog to investigate the whole matter, though there seems no reason that we should wish to be better informed on the subject to-day than we were yesterday.

When I was quite young I used to visit an elderly lady on whose drawing-room wall hung an old French print of a charming young woman with curling hair, and a floating mantle. The margin bore the inscription: 'Adrienne Le Couvreur, Actrice du Theatre François.' I often paused as I left the room, to look at her, and my friend, who was of a sentimental turn of mind, generally ejaculated with plaintive satisfaction, 'Poor soul! One of Love's martyrs!' I admired the appearance of the graceful lady, but I never desired to learn her history; maybe the brief biography offered to me was a little cloying, anyway when my friend died, and I no longer saw the portrait, the feeble interest I had felt in Mademoiselle Le Couvreur passed away. All this happened long ago. Recently when in Paris, more from habit than the hope nowadays of picking up any prizes, I strolled along the stalls bordering the Quai Voltaire, and in passing my eye was caught by the frontispiece of a small opened volume. The picture seemed familiar, it represented an attractive lady of the eighteenth century. Glancing at the title-page I saw the book was the collected correspondence of Mademoiselle Le Couvreur; and the frontispiece a replica of my old friend's engraving.

Poor 'Love's Martyr!' An odd stab of compunction stirred me as I realised my lack of acquaintance with her. I had never sought to know her. I felt suddenly as if for many years I had been guilty of some unkind neglect. I determined to affect an introduction, and the book was soon in my possession.

Excellent reading it proved, the letters are full of wit and charm, perfumed, so to speak, with the aroma of a delightful personality. The allusions in the correspondence to the important episodes of her life are regrettably slight, still they are sufficient to quicken into reality the faded outlines of her tragic story. This meagreness of detail whetted my appetite for more intimate knowledge. From Messrs. Scribe and Legouv  s play I turned with moderate success to various *M  moires*. I read the exquisite *Causerie de Sainte-Beuve* upon her, finally I betook me to the archives of the Bastille. There I found a mass of interesting documents, which, besides affording considerable information concerning her death, offer vivid glimpses of contemporary Society.

Adrienne Le Couvreur was born of humble parentage at Fismes about 1690, but a few years later the Le Couvreur family moved to Paris, and by a curious chance settled in the Rue des Foss  s St. Germain des Pr  s, hard by the newly erected Theatre of the Com  die-Fran  aise, we are told 'd  s son enfance, elle se plaisoit    reciter des vers,' now to attend the performances there became the passion of young Adrienne's existence, herself to tread those boards her absorbing ambition. Fortune unexpectedly befriended her aspirations, a *Dea ex machina* quaintly appeared in the guise of an aunt, a laundress, who happened to obtain the custom of Legrand, the comedian. At the girl's instigation she brought her niece to his notice, and he seems to have quickly recognised her unusual gifts. After some instruction, which procured her several small engagements in Paris, he despatched her to Lille with an introduction to the Directors of the local theatre. Marlborough and Prince Eugene were at that moment closely investing the town, but apparently this in no way hindered the daily representations, and Adrienne made her d  but amid the storm and stress of siege life. There in that same year, 1708, Maurice of Saxony, a precocious lad of twelve, destined later to play so fateful a part in Adrienne's future, commenced his career as a soldier.

Mademoiselle Le Couvreur, young, of rarely seductive charm, speedily became the idol of the camp. In such surroundings, following a calling itself held to be a dishonour, the girl's fate was inevitable. She became the mistress of Philippe Le Roy, officier de Mons. le Duc de Lorraine. Two years later he was killed. Lille became intolerable to her, and she established herself at Strasbourg. There again misfortune overtook her, she was betrayed by a local nobleman under a false promise of marriage, a betrayal

speedily sealed by his lawful union with another woman. In despair Mademoiselle Le Couvreur fled to Paris, hoping to find consolation in the wider opportunities that the capital could afford to her art.

In March, 1717, Adrienne Le Couvreur made her first appearance at the Comédie-Française in the *Electre* of Crébillon. Study and the experiences of life had matured and developed her mentally and physically. Her success was instantaneous and complete. 'Elle commençoit comme les plus grandes comédiennes finissent ordinairement,' wrote a contemporary critic. In fact, she did more, she created a style, to whose principles French dramatic art has remained faithful, and accomplished what even Molière had failed to do; she banished the conventional gestures, the sing-song declamations, and the artificial poses of long tradition. Absolutely natural in all her movements, she swept the gamut of human passion with a sureness, pathos and force hitherto undreamed.

Not physically beautiful, her womanly charm, extraordinary grace, lovely mouth and blue eyes, 'qui parloient même plus que la bouche,' made her eminently attractive. Slowly she acquired a position in Society never previously accorded to any actress. Banned by the Church, denied the sacrament of marriage, they were a class exiled even from the dissolute eighteenth-century world of fashion. Yet in a few years Adrienne writes to a friend with gentle cynicism, 'C'est une mode établie de dîner ou de souper avec moi, parce que quelques duchesses m'ont fait cet honneur.' Truly the ways of this world change little. A host of her distinguished contemporaries were at her feet—Voltaire, whose innumerable and often dull *pièces de théâtre* she dowered with life, Fontenelle, Du Marrais, and the charming Conte d'Argental, until his life's end, her devoted adorer.

She carried to perfection the art of converting 'L'amour en amitié en laissant à celle-ci tout le parfum du premier sentiment.' With Adrienne the *culte* of friendship, so characteristic of the French race, was diligent. Her correspondence reveals an almost painful craving for companionship. Perhaps with Louise de la Vallière, she would have cried, 'Je ne suis pas satisfaite, mais je tâche d'être contente.' Feverishly she indites, 'Ce n'est pas vivre que de ne point voir ses amis, et que la vie est trop courte pour perdre le seul plaisir *réel* que l'on y trouve.' Her friendships were neither hasty nor unweighed. She writes to a would-be friend with a quaint candour unknown in the middle-aged 'young' lady of to-

day. 'Vous sentez vous assez de courage pour resister à tout ce que la vieillesse annonce de triste et d'ennuyeux dans une vieille amie? Songez vous à quel devoirs vous serez obligé dans dix ans si Je vis?' Friendship once conferred was in her eyes a lifelong union.

I have lingered somewhat over these characteristics of Mademoiselle Le Couvreur so delightfully revealed by her letters. They exhibit a natural purity and nobility curiously at variance with her vicious surroundings. The Court had long held a traditional licence for immorality, which, gathering strength from age to age, had gradually infected the whole fabric of Society. But recently the 'filles d'honneur' of the Queen had been superseded by 'Dames du Palais'; with scathing jest had not the courtiers cried: 'although the Queen possesses Maids of Honour, Honour possesses not the Maids'; and if the married women might be none less frail, at least they were credited better equipped to play the game where unfaith was the rule and dishonour the goal.

It was in the year 1720 that Count Maurice of Saxony, the illegitimate son of Augustus the Strong and the lovely Countess Aurora Königsmark, sister of the hapless lover of Sophie Dorotea, arrived in Paris. Already a general at twenty-four, the brilliant participator in a dozen campaigns, he bore a European reputation in war and love. His stay was short, but sufficiently long to inspire in Mademoiselle Le Couvreur a passion before which former experiences faded as taper-lights in sunrise—the passion of *la femme de trente ans*—profound, unselfish, and utterly tragic. Later the Conte de Saxe settled in Paris, and for three years his wayward devotion was the delicious agony of Adrienne's existence. Her active mind responded to his vivacious intellect, her generous nature to his intense egoism, and her sensitive femininity succumbed to the splendid physical strength of the man to whom fatigue was unknown. The life of Paris was, however, ill calculated to satisfy the restless Conte de Saxe. News came that the Duchy of Courland required a sovereign, immediately Maurice was aflame to compete for the vacant throne, and without delay he started for Russia to enforce his candidature. That Adrienne suffered acutely during his absence many allusions scattered throughout her letters pathetically testify: 'Pointes de nouvelles,' she cries again and again. 'Ma santé est assés languissante.' Sometimes the suspense and loneliness seem unbearable. 'Faites vous, mon ami, un devoir de ne me point abandonner,' she entreats a Parisian friend, 'dagnés

soulager la tristesse étonnante ou je suis—songés que je suis malheureuse, que j'ai grande besoin de consolation.'

The campaign of Maurice in Courland proved a failure, and he found himself with an empty purse, a starving army, and a losing cause. When news of this disastrous situation reached Adrienne, her jewels, plate and furniture were at once sacrificed to meet his needs, and the proceeds of their sale despatched by special courier.

After three years' absence he returned to Paris. Smarting from the failure, he was in no mood to find solace in the tender fidelity of Mademoiselle Le Couvreur. His chafed spirit required more pungent distractions. At this critical moment he attracted the fancy of the Duchesse de Bouillon, the fourth wife of a man verging on old age, a girl in her teens, equally notorious for her beauty and her intrigues. As the action of the story quickens the *dramatis personae* come into vivid relief. The brilliant soldier of two and thirty in the zenith of his vigour, the frail *spirituelle* actress, worn with the passion of years, nearly a decade his senior, the sensuous, dark-eyed young Duchess, lovely and unscrupulous—a situation old as the creation of man and woman. For long the Duchess vainly matched her beauty, youth and rank against Adrienne's intellect and charm. Maurice acknowledged the supremacy of neither; he asked but excitement and self-gratification. Suddenly the gay world of Paris, watching the contest with cynical eyes, was startled by the rumour of an attempt on the part of the Duchesse de Bouillon secretly to poison her rival. The mysterious tale spread through society with subtle insistence. To-day, even with full documentary details of the evidence, the cross-examinations, and the trial before us, it is impossible to determine the truth of the accusation.

Early that summer a certain hunchbacked lad of eighteen, Abbé Bouret from Alsace, had arrived in Paris to study painting. Idly pleasuring one day at a fair, fate threw him into the company of a page of the de Bouillon household, an intimacy ensued and Bouret commenced a portrait of his new friend. The matter coming to the ears of the Duchess, she commissioned a miniature of herself, as no doubt the young artist had hoped might happen. The sittings were many, and the Duchess, an animated chatterer on the topics of the day, especially discoursed of Mademoiselle Le Couvreur, whom she designated as the cold-hearted scorner of an esteemed friend. At length she suggested that this sad case might be bettered if Bouret could contrive to administer a love

philtre to the obdurate lady. Doubtless the youthful provincial was mystified by the methods of great ladies, but he was anxious to please, surely too, there was a spice of romance about the venture eminently agreeable to youth. Anyway, he consented to the undertaking. The affair was to be conducted with all secrecy and the magic powder to be delivered to him by night in the Tuileries gardens. Thither at midnight he repaired, and found seated on the parapet by the river the Duchess and a friend in ball costumes, heavily cloaked, and accompanied by two men in masks. As one reads the faded evidence, the weird scene lives again; the veiled figures under the trees half-lost in the gloom of the summer's night, just a glimmer of pale satins and gems; the soft lapping of the Seine below accompanying the whispering voices. The masks propounded to the hunchback the terms of the contract, 200 livres down and a small life pension provided he induced the actress to take the philtre. After much hesitation Bouret agreed to make the attempt, but considerable mutual suspicion seems to have lingered in the minds of the conspirators, as we read of protracted negotiations and still no definite action. In perplexity the lad sought counsel of his confessor, who advised him to communicate with Mademoiselle Le Couvreur. Bouret accordingly wrote to her an anonymous letter proposing an interview in the Luxembourg Gardens. The note still exists and something in its simple directness induced Adrienne to agree to the suggested meeting. Two friends accompanied her to the rendezvous, and to the trio the Abbé related his strange story. Mademoiselle Le Couvreur begged him to visit her the following day, when he found himself confronted by the Conte de Saxe, to whom he maintained his story. That night he was assaulted by masks and accused of broken faith; the terrified youth denied the accusation, and promised to fulfil his agreement. With strange credulity he was believed, and directed on the following night to retrieve the long-delayed philtre from the recesses of a designate clipt yew in the Tuileries Gardens. Throughout the affair appears to have been conducted with curiously melodramatic ingenuity. The packet once in Bouret's possession he promptly transferred it to Adrienne, who forwarded it to the Head of the Police. We are not surprised to learn that the same day found our little Abbé under a *lettre cachée* lodged in the St. Lazare prison. The analysis of the powder produced no definite conclusion, although it was admitted to be of a poisonous nature. No witnesses were called, and no record exists of further action

being taken in any direction. Three months later Bouret was released, and the mystery of the love philtre remained unsolved.

The story with a thousand variations had circulated throughout Paris, and scandal dealt hardly with the Duchesse de Bouillon. After much delay she and her relatives (the old husband apparently did not move in the matter) induced the Government to re-imprison Abbé Bouret with the view of obtaining from him a definite denial of the charge against her. Meanwhile the intimacy between Madame de Bouillon and Monsieur de Saxe progressed apace, and the claims of years of sacrifice and devotion were forgotten. Adrienne Le Couvreur had invested all her capital in a man to whose callous egoism appeal was vain. The inevitable crisis followed. One night when Mademoiselle Le Couvreur was playing *Phèdre*, the Count joined Madame de Bouillon in her box. In a paroxysm of anguish and resentment that overleapt all decorum, the actress, advancing to the footlights, delivered at her rival the bitter self-analysis of the passion-torn heroine. 'Je ne suis point de ces femmes hardies qui, goutant dans le crime une tranquille paix ont su se faire un front qui ne rougit jamais.'

With ready intuition the audience seized the situation and burst into applause. The drama of life eclipsed that of the stage. Neither the Duchess nor Maurice, it was said, ever forgave the open insult, and weeks elapsed before Mademoiselle Le Couvreur could be induced to resume her performances. It was shortly after her reappearance on the boards that Society was petrified by the news that while on the stage she had been seized with internal spasms and conveyed dying from the theatre. After lingering in agony for four days she expired in the arms of Voltaire, who with the faithful Argental had installed himself at her bedside. Of the ministrations of Count Maurice there is no record. Across the dim space of years we feel the sadness of that death-bed, to which the devotion of young Argental could bring no comfort, nor the cynical tenderness of Arouet alleviation. Once a priest visited her and spoke of repentance and eleemosynary bequests as ransom for her soiled soul, but the Church, so long an enemy, spoke too late. The dying woman turned her failing eyes to where stood the marble bust of Maurice of Saxony, not less unheeding than the original, and with tragic constancy uttered the words of the playwright: 'Voilà mon univers, mon espoir, et mes Dieux.'

The attitude of the Gallic Catholic Church in the eighteenth century towards players was one of intense acrimony, and to

Adrienne Le Couvreur it accorded neither benison nor consecrated resting-place. Mystery environs her death, mystery shrouds her burial. On the second night after her decease a hired coach containing a Monsieur Lambrière of uncertain profession, accompanied by two porters, drew up at her door; they entered, and shortly reissued, carrying the uncoffined body of the actress. The driver whipped up his horses, and the vehicle disappeared into the darkness. There the authentic record ends; the burial-place never really transpired, tradition halts, based on contemporary rumours, between the waste lands behind St. Sulpice, and the banks of the Seine—a ghastly interment truly. Mentally we picture the small black group of figures round the white-shrouded corpse, faintly illumined by a lantern; for funeral tapers, the far stars, for funeral orison, the wail of the March wind through the sleeping city. She uttered her own benediction in the preface to her will, written shortly before her death: 'Au nom du Père, du Fils, et du Saint Esprit, Je commende mon âme à Dieu, et Je Lui supplie de me faire miséricorde.'

No wonder all Paris was stirred by so tragic a death, so indecent a burial, and Voltaire expressed the general feeling of horror in his farewell ode:

'Tu meurs, on sait déjà cette affreuse nouvelle
Tous les cœurs sont émus de ma douleur mortelle.

. . . un objet digne des autels
Est privé de sepulture!

Et dans un champs profane on jette à l'aventure
De ce corps si chéri les restes immortels!'

Public opinion unhesitatingly assigned the death of the actress to poison; the abnormal ever commends itself to the multitude. A hasty autopsy had elicited a vague verdict of death from internal inflammation, and before further examination took place the body disappeared. Its resting-place was practically unknown, or the secret of it so well secured that exhumation was impossible. We can only speculate on what powerful influence could successfully achieve this silence. Even Argental failed to penetrate the mystery; it was fifty years later at the age of eighty-five that he conceived the spot to be identified in the Rue de Grenelle, and placed a memorial tablet near 'ce lieu méconnu si longtemps.'

From the Bastille Archives we learn that for many months previously Abbé Bouret had been examined and re-examined

without producing any variation in his statements. After the death of Mademoiselle Le Couvreur he was again vainly interrogated at intervals, on one occasion with the assistance of a Jesuit Father. The strain told upon him, and by the end of the summer we find him vainly petitioning for liberation on the score of his broken health. Suddenly, after a considerable lapse of time, he forwarded to the Government a complete recantation of his story as 'faux, supposé, et inventé.' No clue exists as to the reason of his tergiversation, and it effected no change in the situation. No fresh examinations were ever made, no indictment for perjury ensued. I could find no further record of any legal proceedings. Author and deed seemed alike forgotten. Twelve months later he was quietly liberated after nearly two years' imprisonment, when the tragedy had nigh faded from the volatile Parisian mind. Once without the Bastille all traces of the hunchback Abbé cease; he disappeared utterly, and is heard of no more.

A few years later Marie Duchesse de Bouillon died at the age of thirty, long separated from Maurice de Saxe by mutual consent. To the last she maintained herself innocent of the death of Adrienne Le Couvreur.

It is interesting to compare the difference that existed in France and England during the eighteenth century with regard to the position and consideration afforded to members of the theatrical profession. In the preceding sketch has been indicated the harsh treatment meted to the greatest Gallic actress of the era, perhaps of the following centuries. In striking contrast we learn that a few months after the death of Mademoiselle Le Couvreur, Anne Oldfield, the popular English actress, was given a funeral service and burial in Westminster Abbey. The incident evoked from Voltaire, a fervent admirer of the English, a passionate outburst:

'O Londres! Heureuse terre! . . .

—C'est là qu'on sait tout dire et tout récompenser'

'Nul Art n'est méprisé tout succès a sa gloire.' . . .

' . . . Le Couvreur à Londres aurait eu des tombeaux

'Parmi les beaux-esprits, les rois, les héros'—

CHA SHEALG THUSA TUILLIDH.

BY JOHN RESSICH.

MURDO CAMPBELL, the Lassinmohr head stalker, rose heavily to his knees, holding his still-cold rifle across them, and cursed steadily in his native speech. Oddly enough, profanity in Gaelic is not possible: indelicate words that have become almost everyday language among educated, civilised peoples have no counterpart in that ancient tongue. They simply do not exist. True, when your Highlander enters either of the Services he can, given time, for he is normally a cautious mover, develop a notable talent for swearing in English, but on his own ground he will do no more than curse comprehensively and, if inspired, volubly as did Murdo at that moment. The object of his wrath, a dog-fox so large that to a Leicestershire eye he would have seemed like a wolf, was now crouched hidden on the opposite wall of the deep corrie high up among Inverness-shire hills, peering across the dip at Murdo with that vulpine expression so suggestive of a grin.

Murdo's words died away in a mechanical mutter: he slipped on the safety-catch and laid his rifle beside him where his right hand would drop on it without groping, straightened his legs and sat filling a pipe but without ever removing from the rocks into which the fox had darted, a cold, pale-blue eye that glittered in his craggy, clean-shaven face. He lost the other in Flanders, but few of us with a pair could observe as much on the high tops as Murdo with one. As he smoked he thought, ponderously as becomes a giant, for Murdo stood a fair six foot four and brought down the scales at fifteen stone, mostly bone.

Almost inevitably, in a man of his calling, Murdo was a theorist. On a deer forest such as Lassinmohr, where despite his constant efforts the mountain hare swarmed and spoiled many a hard stalk by running uphill and alarming the deer, he argued that a pair of foxes were an asset of positive value in keeping them down, a virtue which more than counterbalanced any harm they might cause by lifting a very occasional red-deer calf, usually too well guarded by hinds whose forefeet can strike like daggers. True there were lambs farther out, but that was not his affair: an

attitude productive of stark enmity with the shepherd, for Murdo was a Campbell in a MacDonald country, where, strange though it may sound after two and a half centuries, Glencoe and its tragedy is still a lively memory, for the Gael lingers so much in the past that his sentiment is ever new-born. For the shepherd's feelings Murdo cared nothing: indeed he probably welcomed the diversion, for even to-day a mild feud is not without its slight compensation for the dullness of an epoch when the dirk may no more be drawn. Unhappily for Murdo and his enlightened views the foxes had seen fit to extend their operations to the grouse moor adjoining, and since a fox hunts by sight as well as scent, peremptory orders had come from the Big House for the extirpation of his brace together with their heirs and dependants. Nor was the situation open to the arguments or finesse of his craft, for the proprietor was no ignorant interloper from the towns, but the Laird himself, sib to the Chief and one who, living on his own acres all his life, knew as much as any stalker.

But a letter received only a few days before had tempered this wind to Murdo. Among the guests to whom he had stalked the previous season was a pleasant gentleman from 'up about England yonder,' who, during long waits and friendly talks on the high tops, had informed him that he was a Hunt Secretary, which, as interpreted to Murdo, signified the person who organised the chasing of foxes on horseback. He explained that the supply in his particular bit of country was running short of the demand, and as fresh blood was always desirable, a litter of strong, healthy cubs would be generously paid for. Murdo, non-committal as always, said he would think about it. When the Laird's order reached him, he commenced to think, and when that was followed by the letter, he acted.

It has been explained that Murdo was a theorist, but usually to some purpose. He knew he had in an earth or den somewhere on the forest this pair of foxes who had probably mated earlier—it was then May—and deduced cubs. But their den had so far evaded his admittedly casual search, and his was a wide district, mountainous, rugged and rocky, that completely favoured the operations of such cunning depredators. He realised that a dog would be useful, but the working deerhound went out with Landseer and black powder. Although he possessed no dog he could easily have obtained one, but he had always openly objected to dogs about the place, as he expressed it, and in any case to call

in the assistance of a dog would be a sad admission of weakness; or, worse, it meant approaching his enemy the shepherd, and Murdo, a proud Campbell, had no intention of allowing any Mac-Donald to exult. He would cope with this matter single-handed, and his thesis, as he patiently worked it out, was that if he could shoot the dog-fox the vixen would then require to work twice as hard, and in increasing ratio as the cubs grew, so would no longer be able to continue to hunt by the light of MacFarlane's Lantern, as his forebears called the moon, from that enterprising Clan's eminence in removing goods on the hoof, noiselessly and with despatch, but must expose herself by day and eventually be tracked down. Thus argued Murdo.

This was the dog-fox: he knew its markings. He was well aware that it had been one of those sudden changes of wind which make all such narrow corries the bane of a stalker's life that had given the fox his scent and enabled it to whip into the cover of some boulders just as it was coming right on to Murdo's rifle sights. He was quite certain that it would be watching him, but he had seen the leveret hanging limp in its jaws. That assured him that the cubs were there unless they were not yet born and the vixen too heavy to hunt. Suddenly Murdo's well-trained eye caught sight of a slight movement across the corrie. Knowing the place like the palm of his own huge hand he had from the beginning seen that the fox, whether it held forward or sneaked back to make a detour, must show itself in the open for a fraction of time, and however fast its rush, Murdo worked it out that he could align his rifle sights as quickly. He leaned forward almost imperceptibly, cupped his left hand in his lap, relaxed his teeth, caught his pipe neatly as it dropped and stowed it between his legs. His right hand had already released the safety-catch and closed round the breech of his weapon.

Great white clouds slowly broke against the blue of the early morning sky, empty except for a solitary questing buzzard that circled round to investigate, then floated away with shrill cries of anger on realising that the situation held no possibilities for it. Half an hour passed. No Red Indian, veritable or mythical, could possibly have excelled Murdo in the exercise of patience, but, partly from experience, yet more from an instinctive feeling he knew that the fox must move first and was comfortably certain that he would not have to wait much longer: those cubs or the vixen or both were pulling at their provider. The moment was

approaching. He decided to concentrate on an unobtrusive opening that led obliquely up and away from him. He stealthily lifted his rifle and laid it along his thigh, then with a quickness barely credible in such a slow-moving lump of a man, he had slued half-right, drawn up his knees, thrown forward his hands and fired. The echo of the shot twanged and whined up the corrie and reverberated into the silence of the hills. The instant he had squeezed the trigger Murdo jerked out the spent cartridge and slipped home a fresh one: but it was not required. He stared hard, then slung round his telescope-case. A glance through what he called his perspective merely confirmed what his eye had told him. He relit his pipe and without haste heaved himself up and commenced to clamber round to the other side.

For many days the vixen and the whereabouts of her den baffled Murdo, but he was working to a plan. His patient, methodical methods, shot across with the fatalistic inspirations of the Gael, sharpened by his four-years' war service and skill with the rifle, made him a deadly and relentless adversary. And time was with him, likewise the Laird, who, knowing a man's value, was always content to allow a tried subordinate a free hand. In the month of May a stalker has not too much to do, thus Murdo, having systematically drawn out a map of his ground and sectioned it, was able daily to quarter the forest like a well-trained pointer. The vixen herself he had only seen once, but for him once was enough. That she had remained on the forest after her mate was slain told him all he wanted: cubs were there or she would have gone. Yet she still appeared to hunt only by night. Murdo worked accordingly.

But although the days passed into weeks and as he returned each evening to the cottage at the head of the loch where his sister Morag, a gaunt replica of himself in a petticoat, kept house for him, his unvarying answer to her question had so far been no more than a hopeful 'not yet,' nevertheless Murdo knew that he had written the vixen's fate. The others of the Lassinmohr staff, keepers and ghillies, knew better than jeer at the dour and saturnine stalker, but the shepherd, Rory MacDonald, stood outside the game-preserving circle, and showed his independence by missing no opportunity of reviving ancient tribal pleasantries with traditional analogies between the fox and the Clan Campbell. But Murdo scarcely heeded the banter until Rory offered to run down the vixen with his dog. That hurt, for a dog just then was pre-

cisely what Murdo sorely needed and none knew that better than he. Yet there was no thought of compromise. His pride was touched. Single-handed he had started the job and so would he finish it. 'If that mongrel-descended brute of yours as much as shows his nose on the hill, Rory MacDonald, I will give you his skin to dry,' was his sole comment: but for Rory it was enough.

Then early one morning, as he knew ultimately he would, soon or later, Murdo found at the entrance to a small glen, a trace, fresh and unmistakable, where the vixen had rested, no doubt more to reconnoitre than from weariness, and there also were tiny spots of blood and a few grouse feathers.

Murdo neither showed nor felt any elation, he merely took his bearings very carefully. That evening, in a wide sweep that took him nearly half a day, he fetched up at a point which, from the other side of the glen, commanded the huddle of rocks where he now felt sure the vixen had her den. He pulled a few armfuls of old, long heather, spread it with a waterproof ground-sheet above, rolled himself in his plaid and lay down to sleep on his comfortable bed. He had no weapon: Murdo was on reconnaissance. Before dawn he was awake. He yawned mightily, laid aside his plaid and turned on his face with his telescope handy, to await the light.

Stories are told of sentries in the Bank of England vaults who have quite lost their nerve in the solitude and gone to pieces, but only one who has lain out alone through the darkness of night on a wild Highland mountain, so high and so detached that he may well feel that he has for ever abandoned all contact with human beings, if indeed they ever existed, can have any idea of the awe-inspiring feeling of utter and frightening loneliness the black, eerie stillness brings. And it can be cruelly cold at night up there even in early summer. But no thought of spook or spirit or Pictish survival disturbed Murdo. His practical mind had room only for the single idea. As the light broke faintly and early mists began to drift away in wisps he adjusted his glass and with calm certitude trained it on the opposite side of the glen. He had not long to wait.

When the vixen returned from her hunting and disappeared among the rocks, Murdo, after a long survey, backed away, dragging his sheet and plaid with him until he reached the cover of a hummock, then he rose and made off sharply. When he returned the following morning it was on the other side of the glen. He made

straight and openly for the place and moved as noisily as he could. He was laden with an enormous fishing-basket, a pickaxe, and a long-handled, narrow-bladed peat-cutting spade. Again he carried no rifle. He knew he need not have so burdened himself. He could and ought to have brought one or more of the ghillies to help him, especially at this stage, but, dour and inflexible, Murdo was on his mettle. Just as he had refused the offer of Rory's dog, he would not now condescend to commandeer help, for he well knew the whole MacDonald country-side was watching the contest and maliciously hoping that the Laird would lose patience.

To reach the den he had to climb down an ugly rock-face till he arrived at the shelf where the smell of fox and the scattered *débris* of game gave ample evidence of the vixen's home. Murdo took in every possibility of the situation while he disembarassed himself of his equipment, and a faint expression that was almost a smile flitted over his rugged face as the action brought back the memory of those hundreds of occasions when he had wearily thrown off his cumbersome accoutrements in France. Then, motionless, considering, he stared down at the narrow cleft in the rock that was the obvious entrance to the den. As he stood, first one, then another, then another sharp little nose with a pair of bright beady eyes appeared in the triangular opening at the foot of the crevice. Murdo had to admit to himself that just then another man would have been invaluable. It was a tough, almost impossible task for one individual; but if he went away for assistance, now that the vixen knew that her den was discovered she would remove her cubs the moment his back was turned and he would have to recommence his laborious task. No, he dared not leave. He stepped forward to examine more closely, for his alert eye had noticed that the grain of the slaty stone ran straight up and down, and, yes, there was a fault: a faint but definite perpendicular flaw running through the boulder that formed one side of the entrance.

Murdo removed his jacket, spat on his hands and swung the pick. Well aware that from somewhere the vixen was apprehensively watching him, for two hours he worked steadily, pausing only now and then to test the fixity of the section he hoped to split and detach. Then he felt it give under his hand and rested. He smoked stolidly through a pipeful: methodically knocked out the ash and dottle, then gripped the loosened stone and heaved.

It came forward easily enough since it was not bedded but merely rested on the shelf. But when Murdo felt its weight he checked in alarm and almost frantically pushed it back. He had just in time realised that if he had allowed it to topple forward he never could alone have raised it again. He admitted to himself that he had had a fright. For nearly another hour he searched for loose stones and with the largest he could carry he built a cairn on which the boulder would rest when he pulled it forward. He tested it: found the angle from which he could heave it back, then allowed it to remain. Lifting the basket he clambered over and with some difficulty squeezed his bulk through the opening. As his eye became accustomed to the dim light he was able to count six well-grown cubs. With astonishingly little difficulty he stowed five carefully into his basket, then closed it. The sixth, after a struggle in which the sharp little teeth more than once punctured his tough skin, he succeeded in swathing round the middle and neck with a strip of sacking, over which he cautiously twisted a harnessing of soft copper wire, drove a chisel into a fissure and made fast the end of the wire to it. He heaved back the boulder, chipped one of the stones till it roughly fitted the triangular opening, rammed it home tightly, collected his gear, shouldered his heavy basket and trudged off.

He could go straight back to his cottage now, so with his tireless bent-knee stride, he was able to return to the glen before dusk. The wind, such as there was, blew towards him, but he knew that in any case the mother would not leave until the last moment. Within forty yards he halted, knelt on one knee and, raising his rifle, whistled.

In a flash the vixen leaped into view and hesitated for an instant to look at her relentless enemy. The shot whanged, and on the sound she sprang convulsively into the air, dropped and lay.

Murdo rose, walked slowly forward and looked down at the vixen. His face showed no trace of anything as he ejected the spent cartridge and removed the others from the magazine into a pocket, but his solitary eye seemed to be lit with a gleam of pity as he turned over the head quite gently with the toe of his heavy boot and said aloud: '*Cha shealg thusa tuillidh.*'¹

¹ 'You will hunt no more.' Pronounced phonetically: Ha hellak oosa toooley.

THE RUNNING BROOKS.

Oliver Goldsmith : Stephen Gwynn (Butterworth, 15s. n.).

We Were One : M. A. Wyllie (Bell, 15s. n.).

Elegant Extracts : Edmund Malone and George Hawes (Lovat Dickson, 8s. 6d. n.).

Country Airs : W. J. Blyton (Blackie, 7s. 6d. n.).

England All the Way : James Turl (Constable, 7s. 6d. n.).

Night Pieces : Thomas Burke (Constable, 7s. 6s. n.).

The Peacock Pattern : Allan Govan (Murray, 7s. 6s. n.).

War Paint : F. V. Morley (Faber, 7s. 6d. n.).

The Body in Bedford Square : David Frome (Longmans, 7s. 6d. n.).

Odd John : Olaf Stapledon (Methuen, 7s. 6d. n.).

The Maker of Heavenly Trousers : Daniele Varè (Methuen, 7s. 6d. n.).

Selected Poems : Æ. (Macmillan, 5s. n.).

'Your pulse is in greater disorder than it should be. . . . Is your mind at ease?' asked Dr. Turton as he stood beside the bed on which Oliver Goldsmith lay dying in the bright April weather of 1774. 'No, it is not.' The answer, then as now, struck the keynote of a life whose superficial contradictions are so sympathetically examined and set forth in considered perspective in Mr. Stephen Gwynn's engrossing biography of the great Irishman. For Mr. Gwynn in this finely balanced, illuminating study of 'the ugly duckling of English literature' sees his subject steadily and sees it whole. The result is a book which cannot fail to delight the student of letters and of human nature alike. Mr. Gwynn has vision as well as knowledge. His analysis of Goldsmith's character—his fecklessness, his essential Irishness, his capacity for self-pity, his often illogical generosity, his vanity—is as shrewd and as gentle as his estimate of his genius is fairly proportioned. The judgment of his contemporaries and of posterity has long been passed upon Goldsmith the writer. What Mr. Gwynn has done is to clarify that judgment and to recreate, in all his versatility, his contradictory frailties and strength, the man himself.

We Were One, a biography of the painter, W. L. Wyllie, written by his wife, is not only an intimate portrait of a great personality. It is also a love-story in the best sense of those romantic words. For it depicts, as the background to a career whose record covers an immense output of splendid work, a lifetime of married happi-

ness crowned by a golden wedding. The work of W. L. Wyllie as a painter of sea and shipping is too well known to need emphasis. The account given by Mrs. Wyllie of how many of his most famous canvases came into being, of the conditions under which they were painted, and of the subjects that inspired them is in itself of great interest, connected, as parts of it are, with events of historical and poignant importance. The book, too, throws many charming side-lights on the often adventurous companionship of two people whose mutual love of the sea and of boats was by no means the weakest of the ties between them, who not only sailed and raced, but actually built, their own sea-going craft which they came to regard as a second home.

That colonels are by no means so dull as they are often painted is abundantly proved by the correspondence between Colonels Edmund Malone and George Hawes now published under the engaging title, *Elegant Extracts*. The letters begin in 1900, in which year the writers joined different battalions of the Royal Fusiliers, and cover a period of twenty-five years. During that time the two friends saw active service in India, Africa, Burma, Bermuda and elsewhere. Their comments upon a soldier's life, professional and social, and upon the 'great events and the people who have taken part in them since the opening of this century,' are neither 'middle-aged' nor 'grey'—a description which the writers admit as now being applicable to themselves—but are indeed so fresh and lively as to make most entertaining reading. The volume ends with an account of life in post-war Paris, where Colonel Hawes settled after his marriage to Millicent Duchess of Sutherland, who contributes a rather odd preface to this eminently readable 'duobiography.'

Swords, so tradition has it, have before now been beaten into ploughshares. To forsake a pen which had earned its owner twenty years of success in Fleet Street and the editorial chair of a group of daily journals for that implement of nowadays uncertain reward must have needed considerable courage, moral as well as physical. Yet this is what Mr. W. J. Blyton did and has recounted the doing of it in a most convincing, candid, and delightful way in *Country Airs*. The book is packed with the fruits of practical experience from the initial salvaging of a derelict property, an exciting struggle with the unexpected results of the experimental firing of a field, and the importation of three Ayrshire cows who turned out to be completely mad, through all the strenuous, bitter-sweet, daunting,

encouraging happenings involved in the establishment of a model farm. 'One should not go to reside in the country to admire or flirt with it,' says Mr. Blyton, 'but to work in it and live by it also,' and so strikes the keynote of a book whose common sense, humour and insight are emphasised by no small measure of literary charm.

Mr. James Turle also writes with knowledge and understanding of the country-side, though from an entirely different angle from that of Mr. Blyton. His *England All the Way*—a pilgrimage on paper—is a pleasantly loquacious, rambling study of things seen, heard, or read concerning different parts of the country—little bits of history, conjectural and authentic; scraps of folk-lore; odd pieces of information gathered from old maps, old roads, old tavern-signs, old newspapers, or chance conversations. The book was inspired by the suggestion of the night-watchman of the author's earlier volume, 'The England I Love Best,' that Mr. Turle should write about 'all you've seen and done, and old towns and rivers and such, for them as can't go about.' Its contents cover so much in time and space which is informative of the past and pertinent to the present that one wishes he had seen fit to add an index.

Had the eighteen stories in *Night Pieces* appeared anonymously most readers would have identified them unhesitatingly as the work of Mr. Thomas Burke. For here, often achieved within the space of a few lines, are the bold outlines of setting, the swift suggestion of atmosphere, the trenchant, humorous, sympathetic drawing of character which have long been his sign-manual. Some of these tales have a grim intensity of theme and treatment; some are 'creepy,' some are good comedy; some deal with crime, others with decent, working people as they fulfil their daily round. All are excellent examples of the art of the short-story writer. And several are staged against those London backgrounds which Mr. Burke has made peculiarly his own.

Successful creation of atmosphere is a notable feature also of Mr. Allan Govan's novel, *The Peacock Pattern*, in which he tells the story of the birth and development of the Paisley shawl industry in relation to those most closely concerned with it. Moreover, into this tale of a humble experiment which rapidly became a big business the author has so cleverly woven the strands of history, of fact, and of romantic fiction as to produce a vivid tapestry of place, of time, and of people.

With the increase of detective fiction there has been a corre-

sponding decrease in books of fictional adventure. The torch of Henry Seton Merriman is all but snuffed out by the detectives' bag of tricks. Occasionally a brighter flame escapes as a Pocahontas, or the new book by Mr. F. V. Morley, *War Paint*. Whether it is a book for the young or for the old does not matter; like all good adventure stories it is for both, and after a surfeit of clues, bloodstains, and lights shining upon the upturned faces of dead financiers it is like a breath of sea air. It is the story of two boys from Boston who come to London in a ninety-ton schooner, the *Active*, in 1806 and, having raised a loan from Mr. Coutts, the banker, set off as traders among the natives and settlers of the west coast of America. The book is packed with adventures, probable and improbable, and such is the skill of the telling that the story must stir the most latent of adventurous spirits and fix sails and a rudder to the armchair of the most sedentary reader.

Yet, however skilful Mr. Morley may be in setting pulses fluttering, there is still something to be said for the method of Mr. David Frome, especially when, as in *The Body in Bedford Square*, he leads his readers by such ingeniously contrived doubts and bewilderment to an unforeseen conclusion. This is, I think, the most exciting of the 'mystery-thrillers' which Mr. Frome has yet given us; there are moments when we are really anxious as to the fate of Mr. Pinkerton, and the timely advent of Inspector Bull is almost as much a relief to us as it must have been to him. But why, in a story in which all the other pieces of the jig-saw puzzle are so neatly dovetailed, is there such a flagrant discrepancy between the clothing of the corpse as depicted by the artist responsible for the jacket and that described by the author?

Mr. Olaf Stapledon has already been hailed by more than one competent critic as the possessor of a very remarkable imagination. His latest novel, *Odd John*, is likely to reinforce that verdict, despite the fact that this story of the 'supernormal' who founded a colony of his own kind on a remote Pacific island and then destroyed himself and them rather than submit to 'normal' interference is too strange, too uncomfortable, too *macabre*, to be to everyone's liking. There are things in the book which will make the sensitive reader shudder; others that may shock prudish sensibilities before it is realised that the author's frank attitude to sex in many of its manifestations is biological rather than erotic; others again that set the mind questing towards far horizons of thought and aspiration. Fantastic it all undoubtedly is and yet

infused with compelling sincerity. My own quarrel with a book which I found at once impressive and disconcerting is that it seems to lead nowhere. What exactly is Mr. Stapledon driving at? What is the constructive idea behind his destructive exposition? To say that the answers to these questions appear as a matter of some urgency is to pay tribute to the imaginative power of this unusual novel.

The Maker of Heavenly Trousers, the first novel written in English by Dr. Daniele Varè who until recently held the post of Italian Minister to Peking, is a book of rare and delicate charm, beautifully written, humorous and gay. Its background is a corner of the ancient Tartar city in Peking where the narrator, having rented an old house from an estimable but boring Chinese landlord, followed his profession of journalism, in great tranquillity, served by the Five Virtues who, he admits, ran the establishment less for his convenience than for their own advantage. Its story is of himself and of Kuniang, the little Italian waif whom he befriended and ultimately married. With the intrusion of later, somewhat melodramatic complications it loses a little of its charm. But even so it is a highly distinguished piece of work, delightful to read and to remember, presenting a picture of cultured simplicity and peace whose most startling disturbances seem to consist in the artistic inspirations of the wife of the head 'boy' who, when called upon to mend the seat of an old pair of pyjamas, returned them with a yellow monkey patched in upon the right, his long arm stretched across to reach an apple on the left. On another occasion the same inventive lady adorned the worn heel of a woollen sock with a couple of scarlet bats.

'If I am to be remembered I would like it to be for the verses in this book. They are my choice out of the poetry I have written.' Thus wrote Æ at the beginning of *Selected Poems*, a posthumous volume whose worth to those who loved, and now lament, him is enhanced by this note of personal dedication.

M. E. N.

REPRINTS RECEIVED.

Peace with Honour: A. A. Milne (Methuen, 1s. n.).

The Campaign of Adowa: and *The Rise of Menelik*: G. F.-H. Berkeley (Constable, 15s. n.).

Readers may like to know of the reissue of the above two books, each with its different bearing upon the present international situation.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 145.

THE Editor of the CORNHILL offers two prizes of books to the value of £1 from John Murray's catalogue, to the two solvers of the Literary Acrostic whose letters are opened first. Answers must be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, 60 Albemarle Street, W.1, and must contain the Coupon from page iv of the preliminary pages of this issue. They must reach the Editor by the 30th November.

- ‘She keeps them white;
She guards them from the steep.
She feeds them on the fragrant height,
And —— them in for ——.’
1. ‘Now —— the lily all her sweetness up,
And slips into the bosom of the lake.’
 2. ‘Nor let the beetle, nor the death-moth be
Your mournful Psyche, nor the downy ——
A partner in your sorrow's mysteries’;
 3. ‘Under the greenwood tree
Who loves to —— with me,’
 4. ‘Safe where I cannot —— yet,
Safe where I hope to lie too,
Safe from the fume and the fret’;
 5. ‘O —— ! it is a gentle thing,
Beloved from pole to pole!
To Mary Queen the praise be given!’

Answer to Acrostic 143, September number: ‘I am that *which began*; Out of me the years roll’; (Swinburne: ‘Hertha’). 1. *WeB* (Thomas Gray: ‘The Curse upon Edward’). 2. *HerE* (Gray’s ‘Elegy’). 3. *Incense-breathinG* (Gray’s ‘Elegy’). 4. ‘To *CeliA*’ (Ben Jonson). 5. *HeaveN* (Blake: ‘The Tiger’).

The first correct answers opened were sent by Miss Ethel Barnes, Nursing Sisters’ Institution, 10 Collingham Road, Earls Court, S.W.5, and Miss Beatrice Litster, 33 Reid Terrace, Edinburgh, 4, who are invited to choose books to the value of £1 from John Murray’s catalogue.

Solvers need *not* send the source of the quotations used in these acrostics.

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